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Herbert Hoover and the New Deal, 1933-1940.

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HERBERT HOOVER AND THE NEW DEAL, 1933-1940

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The Hoover Papers at West Branch, Iowa, recently opened to scholars, contain invaluable material on politics, policies, and personalities of the 1930's. Through an extensive examination of the ex-President's papers and those of his chief lieutenants, Ogden Mills and John Callan O 'Laughlin, I have attempted to reconstruct Hoover's political activities during the period, 1933-1940.

Although Hoover's correspondence, speeches, and publications underline his devotion to the ideology of American Individualism, they also expose a man of political sensitivity, motivation, partisanship, and ambition. Hoover spent the entire decade of the 1930's embroiled in oppositionist politics.

The ex-President's retirement in Palo Alto was a screen which permitted him time to study issues, evaluate personalities, and plot strategy. He opened an extensive correspondence, advised supporters, dabbled in local politics, and maneuvered for control of the Republican Party organization.

As his lieutenants pointed to accumulating "evidence" of New Deal tyranny and the need for a more aggressive role from their "Chief," Hoover restated his ideas concerning

government in society in The Challenge To Liberty. He denounced what he saw as an abridgement of individual liberties, an increasing bureaucratization, and regimentation of society.

In his efforts to rally a dispirited party and to vindicate his own record, Hoover returned to the political stump and lambasted the New Deal. Too often, he ignored the harsh realities of the time and dwelt on ideas. Yet, he gained conservative support. He accelerated local activity through grass roots conventions and the enrollment of young Republicans. Although the GOP rejected his suggestions for a statement of principles, he was making a political comeback.

In 1936, anxious for vindication and a chance to "debate the issues," Hoover hoped a deadlocked convention would turn to him. He maintained an active schedule, denounced the New Deal, and delivered one of the best speeches of his career at the GOP Convention. The party, however, nominated a more available candidate and, as Hoover expected, lost the election.

Convinced that his party must exert a more aggressive role and defend its record, Hoover attempted to reorganize it in 1937. He allied with conservatives in organizing a Program Committee to draw up a statement of principles and outline policies. He developed a close working relationship with the National Chairman and the Executive Committee and

encouraged opposition to the New Deal. Despite the defeat of his mid-term convention proposal, Hoover's drive for party leadership was widely recognized as serious.

1938 was the crucial year for Hoover's political comeback. Despite his own activity and increased following, his lieutenants lost key positions inside the party organization. Only the Republican Party's sweeping congressional victories kept alive his glimmering hopes.

Sadly, Hoover exhausted the last of his political strength in a futile effort to capture the 1940 presidential nomination. He openly courted delegates and advertised his willingness to run. He ignored reality. He failed even to endorse a more available candidate of his own views. 1940 was his political curtain call. Defeat, age, and death had decimated his political legion. The only door left open was that of elder statesman. Reluctantly, he looked toward it.

INTRODUCTION

Herbert Hoover was a man with strong psychological needs. Early in life he developed a set of principles which he categorized as "American Individualism." Throughout his professional and political careers he reaffirmed his devotion to that ideology. Not even the greatest depression in American history undercut his faith in his ideas. On leaving office, discredited, maligned, and heartsick, he felt need for vindication--both for his ideas and himself.

This dissertation is not a biography, it is not a complete record of his career, it is not a study of the New Deal, nor is it an effort to show any continuity or relationship between the Hoover Administration and the New Deal. It is primarily an examination of Herbert Hoover's political activity and his opposition tactics to the New Deal during the 1930's. It is an attempt to show why Hoover acted as he did. It focuses on his personal correspondence, his publications, and his speeches, all of which aimed at persuading the public to reject the New Deal. It is only one piece of a gigantic puzzle.

The New Deal of the 1930's challenged many of Hoover's basic ideas concerning the role of government in the economy and society. With sincerity and with bitterness, he

returned to the political arena after 1932 in an effort to halt "the challenge to liberty." In his mental framework, the New Deal became synonymous with evil. Hence, his charges were dipped in extreme emotional and political hyperbole. At times his accusations and his failure to even admit the possible sincerity of his opponents are unreasonable. Although he was often misquoted, often misled, and often misunderstood, he was his own worst enemy. He rarely exercised restraint in his analysis of the New Deal.

Erroneous New Deal methods hardly proved conspiracy, un-Americanism, or totalitarian motives on the part of his opponents. Nor did the failure of certain New Deal policies invalidate their humane objectives or prove the soundness of his American System. His ideas, after all, had been thoroughly tested in his own administration. Notwithstanding, his speeches, articles, and books evoked constructive debate and uncovered genuine flaws, potential dangers, and inefficient methods. Too, some of his charges were proven true in the long run.

Despite the ex-President's blemished reputation, he commanded a significant following throughout the 1930's. He made the most of his influence. Of all the New Deal's critics, he alone held a national audience, he alone was consistent in opposition, and he was the most sincere opponent. Other men would have arrived at many of his conclusions concerning the inefficiency, unconstitutionality,

and revolutionary nature of the New Deal, but it was Hoover who first saw, first denounced, and first demanded termination of many of the new proposals.

He was a self-appointed "conscience" for the nation. At times he underlined a tragic as well as negative element of the 1930's. He sincerely thought that an alien philosophy was destroying American traditions and values. Perhaps the afternoon of life overtook him. He was a seasoned actor who remained onstage long after the play had ended. He read his lines with a remarkable consistency and overrated his experience. He never realized that experience can be misleading. He was a minority spokesman, an individualist in a rapidly advancing collective society, a conservative during a cataclysmic era, an abstract thinker and an ideologue who saw an image and denied reality. He predicted numerous trends but ignored the harshness of his times. Tragically, he refused the role of elder statesman and, in an effort to gain vindication, turned to political activity. Again he drank deeply from the cup of bitterness.

CHAPTER I

SHAPING OF AN AMERICAN INDIVIDUALIST

Thoreau once said: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."¹ Herbert Hoover attuned his senses to the theme of American Individualism in his early youth and professional training. It was then he formed a social and political creed which he continually saw fulfilled in his own professional successes. In any evaluation of Hoover, these ideas and some related character traits are essentials to grasp. What forces, therefore--familial, environmental, educational, and professional--shaped Herbert Hoover?

The thirty-first President was born on August 10, 1874, in a two-room cottage at West Branch, Iowa. His father Jesse Clark Hoover, was the village blacksmith. His mother, Huldah Minthorn Hoover, an ardent prohibitionist, was a frequent speaker at the community's Quaker meetings.²

¹Henry David Thoreau, Walden: Or, Life in the Woods (New York, 1961), 272.

²Will Irwin, Herbert Hoover (New York, 1920), 1-10. Hereinafter cited as Irwin, Hoover. Harris G. Warren, Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression (Oxford, 1959), 19-20. Hereinafter cited as Warren, Great Depression. Herbert Hoover, A Boyhood in Iowa (New York, 1931), 3-5. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Boyhood.

Hoover's recollections of his parents were misty. Although remembering few childhood experiences, he did recall a "stern but kindly discipline."³ The loss of his parents at an early age constrained his personality so that he tended "to hold things in, to resist displays of emotion in himself, or others."⁴

Environment and religion played a major role in shaping Hoover's character.⁵ Always conscious of his own experiences, Hoover recalled that nineteenth-century Iowans conquered a vast domain through individual initiative and enterprise. As a youth, he performed a variety of menial chores and observed that most farm families were largely self-sufficient. The Hoovers bought only a few outside essentials.⁶ Despite the hard work, Hoover often escaped to

³Herbert Hoover, Memoirs of Herbert Hoover (New York, 1951), I, 1. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Memoirs. Claude R. Cook, "Herbert Hoover's Notable Career," Annals of Iowa, XXXII (October, 1954), 460-69. Walter F. Dexter, Herbert Hoover and American Individualism (New York, 1932), 3, sees an impoverished youth, a humble origin, and a village environment as shaping the attitudes of a young, impressionable Hoover.

⁴Erwin C. Hargrove, Presidential Leadership: Personality and Political Style (New York, 1966), 98. Hereinafter cited as Hargrove, Presidential Leadership.

⁵Hoover, Memoirs, I, 1; Dexter, American Individualism, 3; David Hinshaw, Herbert Hoover: American Quaker (New York, 1950). Hereinafter cited as Hinshaw, American Quaker.

⁶Hoover, Memoirs, I, 5-6; Hoover, Boyhood, 23-24; Claude R. Cook, "Herbert Hoover's Notable Career," Annals of Iowa, XXXII (October, 1954), 460-469. Hoover recalled "the dime was hard to come by." Memoirs, I, 3.

the virgin forest or to the swimming hole by the willows, where he stalked pigeons, tracked rabbits, fished, or swam.⁷ In maturity, he frequently returned to such natural scenes. Possibly he sensed certain spiritual values in the wilderness. Certainly, he spoke of enriching the soul through this medium.⁸

Hoover's intelligent and loquacious mother impressed her idealism on the young boy. After her death, relatives saw that Hoover retained her religious ideas.⁹ A fellow Quaker noted that religion was a key ingredient in Hoover's character and that his "most distinctive qualities and traits" were spiritual, moral, and mental.¹⁰ One recent student of politics believes that Hoover's religion explained his distaste for exhibitionism, his need for harmony, his desire to serve the public, his basic trust in man's goodness, and his insistence on cooperative effort.¹¹ Hoover parted at times from the peripheral signs of his faith, but he kept the deep spiritual and moral tone. His religion accentuated his

⁷Hoover, Boyhood, 3; Hoover, Memoirs, I, 2.

⁸Herbert Hoover, Fishing For Fun and to Wash Your Soul (New York, 1964).

⁹Irwin, Hoover, 21; Hoover, Boyhood, 16, 17, 25.

¹⁰Hinshaw, American Quaker, vii, 5, 34.

¹¹Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 98, notes that all of these characteristics greatly influenced H. H.'s political values and leadership techniques. David Hinshaw discusses the same traits and their relation to Hoover's Quaker religion. Hinshaw, American Quaker, 35-38.

optimism, individualism, and stubbornness.¹²

Hoover's religion stressed the use of "plain language" and a reliance on logic rather than emotion in attempts to persuade others to accept facts.¹³ Quakers continually sought consensus and harmony. If they could not act in unison they postponed decisions until everyone had an "opportunity to search their hearts for the right answer."¹⁴ Quakers frequently reiterated their devotion to certain sacred principles.¹⁵ They carried their extreme religious individualism over into the economic sphere. Hoover recalled a Quaker emphasis on education, thrift, and individual enterprise, but he could not remember an example of Quaker poverty.¹⁶ This would be significant for a future politician who judged all mankind by his own experiences.

Following their mother's death in 1883, the Hoover children were parceled out among the relatives. This marked

¹²Ibid., 39. Hoover's religion gave him an air of moral superiority which he constantly displayed in his political career.

¹³Hoover, Memoirs, I, 8; Hinshaw, American Quaker, 39.

¹⁴Dexter, American Individualism, 43-44. This Quaker trait was a decisive political weakness in Hoover's career, for he continually displayed difficulty in making key decisions if his advisers disagreed.

¹⁵Ibid., 46. Hoover, Memoirs, I, 9. Hoover not only reiterated certain principles throughout his post-presidential career, but he also defined each issue in moral terms and overused such words as principle, service, justice, truth, and right.

¹⁶Hoover, Memoirs, I, 8.

an abrupt break with old associations. For three years, Hoover "was passed on from relative to relative," always working for his bread.¹⁷ By the close of 1885, he arrived in Newberg, Oregon, where his maternal uncle, Doctor Henry John Minthorn, headed Pacific Academy, a Quaker school. His religious heritage, his self-reliance, and his independence bloomed in his new Oregon home. Under the strain of hard work, the orphan learned the lessons of industry, thrift, and determination.¹⁸ The doctor also preached many homilies to his young nephew, but the most often repeated one was: "Turn your other cheek once, but if he smites it, then punch him."¹⁹

When Doctor Minthorn entered the real estate business in 1888, Hoover ran the Salem office, kept books, typed, and promoted sales.²⁰ He also enrolled in night sessions of the local business school and read the classics in his spare time. At the office Hoover debated political issues but

¹⁷Warren, Great Depression, 20; Hoover, Boyhood, foreword.

¹⁸Hoover, Memoirs, I, 10-11; Irwin, Hoover, 29-35. H.H. recalled saving the money for a long time. Memoirs, I, 10-11.

¹⁹Ibid., 12.

²⁰Ibid.; Drew Pearson, Washington Merry-Go-Round (New York, 1931), 62-63, states that H.H. was a born promoter. As his uncle's sales declined, he "conceived the idea of meeting newcomers at the station, settling them in private boarding houses, thus giving his uncle's salesmen an opportunity to talk to them without competition." H.H. used his commission for renting the rooms to help finance his college education.

noted "the obstinacy and low intelligence of his opponents."²¹

In 1890, Hoover gained conditional admittance to Stanford University. Throughout his tenure in Palo Alto, he held down numerous jobs in offices, and had laundry and newspaper routes. He acquired summer employment with the U. S. Geological Survey.²² At college, he displayed an energy, determination, and ability that would assure future success. He also developed organizational skills and a knack of inspiring loyalty and service among his colleagues.²³

Like most college students of the late nineteenth century, Hoover was probably exposed to the ideas of the Social Darwinists.²⁴ Due to his personal experiences, his religion, and his fierce individualism, he was an ideal convert for Conservative Darwinism. Herbert Spencer's application of the biological scheme of evolution to society, with its note of inevitability, individualism, and cooperation,

²¹Hoover, Memoirs, I, 13-14.

²²Harold Wolfe, Herbert Hoover, Public Servant and Leader of the Loyal Opposition (New York, 1956), 17-19. Hereinafter cited as Wolfe, Hoover. Hoover, Memoirs, I, 15-18, 18-19.

²³Wolfe, Hoover, 17-18; Irwin, Hoover, 62-67; Joseph S. Davis, "Herbert Hoover, 1874-1964: Another Appraisal," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXVIII (Summer, 1969), 296. Will Irwin, a Stanford contemporary, notes Hoover's organizational talent and his ability to inspire loyalty. Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 99.

²⁴Warren, Great Depression, 33. Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Philadelphia, 1944), 8.

explained much in Hoover's own past.²⁵ William Graham Sumner of Yale was even more influential. It was Sumner who saw the Protestant ideal in the persevering, thrifty, determined individual who inevitably rose to the top in a free competitive order. To Sumner, the progress of civilization depended on the selective process of "nature" and hence he preached unrestricted competition. He defended inequality as inevitable. Yet, he thought that progress was possible.²⁶ It was the influence of Conservative Darwinism, as advocated by Spencer and Sumner, that Herbert Hoover reflected and espoused throughout his career.

²⁵Ibid., 21, 25-29, 35; Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny (New York, 1956), 90-93, contains the most succinct explanation of Conservative Darwinism. Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven, 1950), 86-90, shows how Spencer's ideas blended with progress, individualism, defense of the existing order, and with natural or divine law.

²⁶Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 37-38, 43, 44-49. Sidney Fine, Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State (Ann Arbor, 1956), 81-91, discusses Sumner's belief that everyone was entitled to a chance (to Hoover, this meant equality of opportunity), that the man of industry, frugality, and patience would succeed, that natural law must take its course, and that the "forgotten man" inevitably paid for the hasty mistakes of reformers who interfered with natural law. On the latter point, see Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny, 91. Also see Commager, The American Mind, 201-202. Although Reform Darwinism was in the air by the 1890's, Hoover escaped its influence or else rejected it. The great spokesman for Reform Darwinism, Lester Frank Ward, promoted the idea of a planned society. To Ward, man was a social engineer who could regulate much of his environment, direct and mold progress, and affect change through experimentation. Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York, 1940), 204-209. Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny, 93-97. Commager, The American Mind, 212-216. Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 52-58.

Upon graduation from Stanford in 1895, amidst the worst depression of the nineteenth century, Hoover took a "pick and shovel" job at two dollars a day in the Sierra Nevada mines.²⁷ In the following months, Hoover ascended the ladder to a clerical post, to mine scout, and to "technical adviser" for the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company. In the Orient, he fashioned a brilliant engineering career.²⁸ On a stateside visit in 1899, he married Lou Henry--his college sweetheart. Accompanied by his bride, Hoover returned to China to supervise the construction of harbors, railroads, and mines. During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, he helped to provision the beleaguered foreign colony and its refugees.²⁹ In 1902, he became a partner and General Manager of the newly-created Oriental Syndicate.³⁰

As a free-lancing, international engineer, Hoover was a globetrotter. He acquired an extensive knowledge of foreign governments, their economies, and histories. He became obsessed with efficiency and organization as the keys to their critical economic and political problems. Too, he

²⁷Hoover, Memoirs, I, 25-28; Warren, Great Depression, 20.

²⁸Ibid.; Hoover, Memoirs, I, 25-34; Wolfe, Hoover, 20-25.

²⁹Hoover, Memoirs, I, 35-72; Warren, Great Depression, 21-22.

³⁰Ibid., 21.

concluded that the American way was uniquely superior.³¹

The Great War, beginning in 1914, opened new doors to Hoover's creative talents, and his organizational, administrative, diplomatic, and judicial abilities were severely tested. Many of his ideas crystallized during his war experience. It was then that he thought through his ideology of "American Individualism."³² Although he did not formalize his views until his publication of American Individualism in 1922, his ordeal as diplomat and food administrator in World War I confirmed his basic beliefs.

From his London headquarters, in 1914, Hoover assumed responsibility for repatriating stranded tourists and, at the request of the American Ambassador Walter Hines Page, he organized a Commission for the Relief of Belgium. Hoover exhibited diplomatic and organizational talents in securing permission to send supplies through the blockade of the belligerents.³³ He rose steadily in the rank of Wilson's

³¹Hoover, Memoirs, I, 75-125; Herbert Hoover, The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1958), v; Herbert Hoover, American Individualism (Garden City, 1922), 7-8. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, American Individualism.

³²Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 100.

³³Hoover, Memoirs, I, 141-148; Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page (3 vols.; New York, 1925), II, 311; Warren, Great Depression, 22. Hoover's administrative methods maximized voluntary cooperation, and his successes reinforced his idea that all goals could be obtained with moral methods.

advisers.³⁴

During the war years, Hoover embellished and elaborated his ideology of individualism without changing its basic tenets. His wartime experience turned him toward public service. When the United States entered the war in April, 1917, Hoover became chief of the United States Food Administration.³⁵

As Food Administrator, Hoover exercised direct control of food production, of farm policies, and of prices, rationing, processing, and distribution of foodstuffs in the United States.³⁶ Hoover defended these extraordinary powers

³⁴William A. Williams, The Contours of American History (New York, 1961), 427. Several of H.H.'s wartime associates noted his penchant for seeing the dark side of every problem. Bernard Baruch, Public Years (New York, 1960), 88-89, 232-233; William White, Autobiography (New York, 1946), 515; Charles Seymour (ed.), The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (New York, 1928), IV, 268; Arno Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peace Making (New York, 1967), 21, 24-27. Hereinafter cited as Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy.

³⁵Cong. Rec., 65 Cong., 1 Sess. (May, 1917), 4947-4950; Hoover, Memoirs, I, 240-25-. Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 305, depicts Hoover's "genius for recruiting competent men and women . . . during and after the war, and [winning] their devoted loyalty." The war-relief activities led to life-time friendships with Edgar Rickard, Mark Requa, Lewis Strauss, Robert A. Taft, Ben S. Allen, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Vernon Kellogg, and Lawrence Richey. Hoover, Memoirs, I, 253, 295. Thereafter, these men served as part of Hoover's political "inner circle" and affectionately referred to him as "Chief."

³⁶Ibid., 240-250; Cong. Rec., 65 Cong., 1 Sess. (May, 1917), 4947-4950; Editorial, "How Hoover Will Help Win," Literary Digest, L (June 2, 1917), 1689. See William C. Mullendore, History of the United States Food Administration (Stanford, 1941), 7-19, 27-34, 77-79, 115-117, 131-194, 226-359.

by citing their emergency and temporary nature. Each agency that he created in order to implement his ideas stressed the cooperative and voluntary nature of his program. His unparalleled successes in economizing, accelerating production, and curtailing waste only reinforced his ideology.³⁷

As a result of his relief experience, Hoover was named head of the American Relief Administration in post-war Europe.³⁸ President Wilson elevated him to an advisory role at the Versailles Conference. Hoover responded with economic and political advice. Although deeply disillusioned with the final peace treaty, Hoover promised to support it publicly.³⁹ The war had crystallized his ideas. It was time to formalize the beliefs that his familial, environmental, educational, and professional experiences had created.

For Hoover, ideas, values, and experience were supremely important. His heritage had included an inculcation

³⁷Ibid.; Irwin, Hoover, 189-244. Also see Louis Filler (ed.), The President Speaks (New York, 1964), 178; Hoover, Memoirs, I, 240-244.

³⁸H. H. Fisher, The American Relief Administration in Russia, 1921-1923 (Washington, 1943), 3-27; Hoover, Wilson, 75-76, 88; and Hoover, Memoirs, I, 334-352; Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919 (Paris Peace Conference), II, 627-728, contains the diplomatic details involved in food relief implementation and explains Hoover's disillusionment with the Allies' obstruction; Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy, 266-273, 474-485, 510-514.

³⁹Hoover, Memoirs, I, 334-352; Hoover, Wilson, 75, 83-89, 183-184; 234; and Woodrow Wilson, War and Peace Presidential Messages, Addresses and Public Papers, 1917-1924 (New York, 1927), I, 635. See New York Times, February 24, 1920, 1.

of concepts lauding the self-made man, opportunity, self-reliance, thrift, mobility, and the sacredness of tradition. His ideology involved an indiscriminate mixture of ideas while appealing to deep emotions and promoting an assortment of values. Because of his religion he rationalized all issues in moral terms. Although he embellished and elaborated his views during the presidency and the years that followed, he articulated the basic premise of his creed in 1922, in a small book entitled American Individualism.⁴⁰

Hoover possessed complete confidence in what he called American traditions, American individualism, the "American system," and America's future. He believed in the uniqueness of the American way with its emphasis on "equality of opportunity."⁴¹ By this doctrine, he meant the right of equal opportunity "to pursue happiness" in the Jeffersonian

⁴⁰The New York Times, December 17, 1922, 1, praised H.H.'s personal interpretation of America's economic, social, and political system as "among the few great formulations of American political theory." Other observers found it less momentuous. Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy In The Great Depression (New Haven, 1957), 10, castigates Hoover's prescription for success as a collection of "homely maxims inculcated in countless nineteenth century Americans."

⁴¹Herbert Hoover, American Individualism (Garden City, 1922), 7-8. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Individualism. Myers, State Papers, I, 1, 398. Boyd C. Shafer, "The American Heritage of Hope, 1865-1940," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVII (December, 1950), 425-450, says that Hoover looked beyond the distant horizons to a time when poverty would end and all men would enjoy the abundant life.

sense.⁴² By insuring equality of opportunity, the American system allowed individual initiative to take one to "that position in society to which his intelligence, character, ability and ambition entitled him." Hoover's own experience proved this to his own satisfaction. Too, he thought the system minimized class structure, stimulated motivation, enlarged the sense of responsibility, and forced man to "stand up to the emery wheel of competition."⁴³

Individualism was more than legalistic justice based on contracts, property, and political equality. By the 1920's, America had "long since abandoned the laissez faire

⁴²Edward O. Guerrant, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Comparisons and Contrasts (Cleveland, 1960), 6. Hereinafter cited as Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts. Hoover often expressed admiration of Jefferson's views on individual rights.

⁴³Hoover, Individualism, 9. In a modified Puritan ethic, he assimilated equality of opportunity and the service state. To H.H., individual initiative operated in the humanities, business, and politics. Milton Viorst, Fall From Grace: The Republican Party and the Puritan Ethic (New York, 1968), 8, 165-166, describes Hoover as "the Puritan larger-than-life," a man of conviction, fidelity, and orthodoxy. Hoover wanted a "higher order of society for the United States" and believed in the Puritan ethic as God's blessing on those who helped themselves. Even the depression did not alter his conviction that it was each man's duty to make himself secure. See Mayer, The Republicans, 411; and Albert U. Romasco, The Poverty of Abundance: Hoover, The Nation, The Depression (New York, 1965), 12. Hereinafter cited as Romasco, Poverty of Abundance. Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 100, notes that Hoover saw federal power as a constant threat and a limit to individual liberty. Hence, he championed voluntary restraint or a minimum of local and state regulation. After construing a system in his mind, he attempted to shape society by his intellectual model. As Commager, The American Mind, 344, notes, Hoover followed the Sumnerian example of constructing an abstract set of principles and "deducing from them some ideal course of action."

of the eighteenth century--the notion that it [was] every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." The nation's laws reflected that abandonment and Hoover was aware of the fact.⁴⁴ Concerning national wealth, he wrote in 1922 that Americans had "learned that fair division can only be obtained by certain restrictions on the strong and dominant." Americans had developed a social conscience and embraced "service and responsibility to others as part of individualism."⁴⁵

Hoover stressed the uniqueness of the American system by describing it as "not capitalism or socialism, or syndicalism, nor a cross breed of them." It was more enduring, since it sprang "from the one source of human progress--that each individual shall be given the chance and stimulation for development of the best with which he has been endowed in heart and mind." To Hoover, the "sole source of progress" was American individualism.⁴⁶

What was the motivating factor in this American

⁴⁴Hoover, Individualism, 10. Herbert Hoover, Challenge to Liberty (New York, 1934), 49. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Challenge to Liberty. Carl N. Degler, "The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover," Yale Review, LII (Summer, 1963), 564, noted the departure from laissez-faire and the "capitalism of Adam Smith." See also Mayer, The Republicans, 411.

⁴⁵Hoover, Individualism, 10-11. By 1934, in Challenge to Liberty, 49, Hoover pointed to public education, public health, public works, public stimulation of scientific research, and even public action to combat depressions.

⁴⁶Hoover, Individualism, 12-13. He described American individualism as a "special social system." For the similarity between Hoover's creed and that of William Graham Sumner, see Fine, Laissez-Faire, 81-91.

system? "Intelligence, character, courage, and the divine spark of the human soul are alone the property of individuals." Each individual must be individually moved. "The most potent force in society is its ideals."⁴⁷ For Hoover, ideas would always impede his perception of reality at the very time that they gave it shape and meaning.

To Hoover, great ideas could be realized only through education, freedom, humaneness, service, and a reduction of individual selfishness:⁴⁸

The will-o'-the-wisp of all breeds of socialism is that they contemplate a motivation of human animals by altruism alone. It necessitates a bureaucracy of the entire population, in which, having obliterated the economic stimulation of each member, the fine gradations of character and ability are to be arranged in relative authority.⁴⁹

Hoover concluded that only fools thought men were equal in ability, character, intelligence, and ambition. The government, however, could insure "liberty, justice, intellectual welfare, equality of opportunity and stimulation to service."⁵⁰ A crucial responsibility of government was to guarantee competition and the right of individuals to achieve their destinies. Economic freedom was as important as the

⁴⁷Hoover, Individualism, 14, 16. Hoover's creed provided an opportunity for individual planning.

⁴⁸Ibid., 16-17.

⁴⁹Ibid., 17.

⁵⁰Ibid., 19. Shafer, "Heritage of Hope," 444, notes that to H.H., biological inequality made economic equality impossible; thus competition was natural. Spencer's biological emphasis with its promotion of inevitability and inequality is obvious.

other freedoms.⁵¹

Leadership was another important principle in the American system. Here quality found expression through a "free rise of ability, character, and intelligence." Hence, "progress of the nation [was] the sum of progress in its individuals."⁵² In contrast to the individual, Hoover characterized the mass as emotional, mindless, and credulous. "It destroys, it consumes, it hates, and it dreams but it never builds."⁵³ Paradoxically, Hoover was to reject this idea of an emotional electorate in his political career.

American Individualism possessed a spiritual side, for "men do not live by bread alone." Individualism admitted "the universal divine inspiration of every human soul." It placed a premium on service to one's fellow man. Permanent spiritual progress depended on each individual.⁵⁴ Economics was only one phase of American individualism. It also aimed at providing "opportunity for self-expression spiritually." Unlike European individualism, the American variety was selfless.⁵⁵

Concerning property, Hoover noted an increasing tendency on the part of Americans to see the "right of

⁵¹Hoover, Individualism, 19.

⁵²Ibid., 23-24.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 7-8, 26-28, 31. To Hoover, all progress depended on individual self-expression and creativity.

⁵⁵Ibid., 37-38.

property not as an object in itself, but in the light of a useful and necessary instrument in stimulation of initiative to the individual." Equality of opportunity checked unrestrained capital.⁵⁶ Sensible taxation reduced "excessive individual accumulations."⁵⁷ Too, in Hoover's mind, the people were beginning to dominate the economy through stock investments, thus promoting the "spirit of community responsibility."⁵⁸

Cooperation, another key factor, was evidenced within the business community and in public acceptance of service and responsibility. These qualities, if added to constructive leadership, would assure progress.⁵⁹ Yet, as Hoover recognized with dismay, "the Government [by 1922, had] become through its relations to economic life, the most potent force for the maintenance or destruction" of his American individualism.⁶⁰

⁵⁶Ibid. Romasco, Poverty of Abundance, 12, demonstrates H.H.'s optimism that America was virtually classless, that labor possessed social and economic mobility, and that labor and capital had achieved harmony in a "concert of interests."

⁵⁷Hoover, Individualism, 39.

⁵⁸Ibid., 40.

⁵⁹Ibid., 43-47.

⁶⁰Ibid., 52. Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 8, notes Hoover's cautious ideas about government-business relations. To H.H., there were three options: unregulated business or true laissez-faire, which had long been discarded; government regulation of business, which was the "American system" and Hoover's course of action; and finally, government-dictated business direction or involvement. To H.H. the New Deal took the third road.

Hoover admitted past mistakes, especially the concentration of power in monopolies. But regulatory legislation had preserved equality of opportunity. Thus, he accepted some regulation as necessary but warned against government participation within the economy at the productive or distributive end.⁶¹ He was optimistic about progress, education, public opinion, business morality, and public conscience.⁶² Yet, he admitted the need for certain reforms. He condemned long work days, the uncertainty of employment, inequality in bargaining power, child labor, and unfair competition.⁶³ He reaffirmed his belief in the inevitability of progress which was attained through a traditional American effort. "Progress must come from the steady lift of the individual."⁶⁴ As he expressed it in 1922, "The failures and unsolved problems of economic and social life can be corrected: they can be solved within our social theme and under no other system."⁶⁵

⁶¹Hoover, Individualism, 52-54. Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 9, 18, notes H.H.'s acceptance of limited regulation and his warning that the "laws of economics" were as "inexorable as Newton's law of gravitation." Warren, Great Depression, 34-35, speaks of Hoover's willingness to regulate in order "to preserve individual competition, conserve natural resources, prevent abuses, and protect liberties." Federal regulation should occur, however, only where state and local governments could no longer protect public interest. See Romasco, Poverty of Abundance, 13, 16.

⁶²Hoover, Individualism, 58.

⁶³Ibid., 59.

⁶⁴Ibid., 60-67.

⁶⁵Ibid., 71.

Hoover's smorgasbord of ideas encompassed the traditional American values: efficiency, enterprise, opportunity, individualism, energy, success, and progress.⁶⁶ He knew what he believed and why. His credo was based on certain fundamental ideas about the nature of man. American individualism was, to him, time tested and proven. To Hoover, there was a certain sacredness, even a mysticism, permeating it. Moreover, he rationalized the contradictions or failures within his system as atypical, abnormal or temporary. He always arrived at the same conclusion: the American system, with its emphasis on individualism, equality of opportunity, freedom, and service, explained America's greatness. This idea of individualism became the driving force that shaped his course as long as he lived.

During the 1920's, as a member of the Harding cabinet, Hoover demonstrated the potential of his ideas. He spurred the Commerce Department to a course of fuller participation in the American economy. He advised business concerning its domestic and international opportunities. The federal government served business by reporting on the stability, resources, needs, and requests of foreign governments.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 2. Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York, 1948), 286. Hereinafter cited as Hofstadter, American Political Tradition.

⁶⁷Herbert Feis, The Diplomacy of the Dollar, 1919-1932 (Baltimore, 1950), 6-18. Joseph Brandes, Herbert Hoover and Economic Diplomacy, 1921-1928 (Pittsburgh, 1962), 7-15, 42. Hereinafter cited as Brandes, Economic Diplomacy.

Hoover, seeing expansion as essential for continued prosperity, championed business interests. To him, each investment accelerated the opportunity for individuals to improve their living standards.⁶⁸

As Commerce Secretary, Hoover fostered trade associations and fair trade codes. He emphasized a maximum of cooperation, voluntarism, and local initiative. Although he endorsed the right of the federal government to umpire, regulate, stimulate, and even coerce, he preferred muted actions, by degrees, and his was a modified laissez-faire policy.⁶⁹ His attitude was manifested in his views on unemployment. Typically, in the recession of 1921-1922, he called a series of conferences, prodded and mobilized local and state agencies, urged public works, and pleaded with the business community to maintain, even expand, production levels. He thought state and local governments could encourage business-labor accord and minimize federal bureaucratization.⁷⁰ The pattern that Hoover followed in 1922 was

⁶⁸William A. Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy (Cleveland, 1959), 58-59. William A. Williams, "Latin-America: Laboratory of American Foreign Policy in the Nineteen-Twenties," Inter-American Economic Affairs, II (1957), 3-30. Brandes, Economic Diplomacy, 65, 214-215. See Eugene O. Golob, The "Isms": A History and Evaluation (New York, 1954), 119-120. Hereinafter cited as Golob, The "Isms."

⁶⁹Brandes, Economic Diplomacy, 217-220; Hoover, American Individualism, 9-12; Warren, Great Depression, 34-35.

⁷⁰Warren, Great Depression, 26-27; Hoover, Memoirs, II, 46.

one he would adhere to the rest of his life.

As a dominant and active cabinet member, Hoover practically became "a folk hero, the embodiment of the national values of prosperity and efficiency." As in the past, he trained his subordinates "to dramatize their activities," consequently reflecting credit on their chief.⁷¹ Throughout the 1920's, he basked in the sunshine of a friendly news media.⁷² Convinced of the rightness of his ideology, and determined to advance the nation to a "new day," the philosopher of American individualism decided to seek the presidency. On August 2, 1927, when President Coolidge issued his famous "I do not choose to run,"⁷³ the flood gates were opened.

⁷¹Mayer, Republicans, 402-403. See also Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 291.

⁷²Claire Nelsen, "The Image of Herbert Hoover as Reflected in the American Press" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Stanford University, 1956), 199, 205. Hereinafter cited as Nelsen, "Hoover Press Image."

⁷³New York Times, August 3, 1927, 1.

CHAPTER II

POLITICS AND POWER

Throughout his political career, Herbert Hoover encouraged the myth that he was "above politics." His heavy correspondence consistently reflects his sincerity in thinking he was apolitical. His lieutenants encouraged him in this belief.¹ Too, his political mistakes seemed to underline his disinterest. Much of his erroneous political judgment, however, was due to the inflexibility of his ideas. He preferred defeat to a compromise on his principles.² Although he had a natural aversion to politics, never learning to enjoy it, he displayed on occasions a knowledge of the fundamental rules and even maneuvered for political advantage.

At politics, Hoover was an anachronism: shy, sensitive to criticism, addicted to worry, unable to admit an error, and

¹Subsequent chapters will verify this contention. The Herbert Hoover Papers, Post Presidential Individual File, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, abound in such references.

²Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 217. Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 293, describes Hoover as "a prisoner of his economic views [who was] handicapped by his philosophy." Rexford G. Tugwell, "The Protagonists: Roosevelt and Hoover," Antioch Review, XIII (December, 1953), 421, sees Hoover immersed "in an ideology completely immune to events."

weighted by a "vein of arrogance."³ His political liabilities would greatly affect his record as President.⁴ He would never become an astute politician, partly because he viewed politics as of secondary importance. Ideas molded his course.

One contemporary charges Hoover with nursing presidential ambitions "for over a decade" before 1928.⁵ At least by 1920, his political aspirations and liabilities surfaced. As beneficiary of an extensive press promotion, he emerged from World War I as a legendary hero.⁶ Consequently,

³Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 293-294; Moley, After 7 Years, 26; and Moos, The Republicans, 383. Lippmann, "The Peculiar Weakness of Mr. Hoover," 3, sees Hoover's distaste for "politicians and their countless accommodations." Too, he was indecisive, especially in controversial matters. Drew Pearson, Merry-Go-Round, 57-59, 63, 70, thought that Hoover was cold, vacillating, indecisive, autocratic, and unforgiving.

⁴Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 295; William Allen White, Selected Letters of William Allen White (New York, 1947), 293. White, Letters, 311-312, discusses H.H.'s liabilities and concludes that every President must recognize politics even if it is "one of the minor branches of harlotry." See White, Autobiography, 634-635, and Burton K. Wheeler, Yankee From The West (Garden City, 1962), 275, for additional recognitions of Hoover's political inability. As Thomas A. Bailey, Presidential Greatness, 218, 317, notes, "If a man cannot lead his party he cannot lead his people."

⁵George Creel, Rebel At Large (New York, 1947), 266.

⁶Lippmann, "The Peculiar Weakness of Mr. Hoover," 1, calls H.H.'s reputation a "work of art." He was over-publicized, over-idealized, and over-sold. As examples of H.H.'s press coverage, see Edward E. Hunt, "Herbert Hoover," New Republic, VIII (September 30, 1916), 213-215; Editorial, New York World, September 2, 1919; Editorial, "Herbert Hoover, Master of Efficiency," Independent, LXXXIX (March 19, 1917), 447; and Editorial, "How Hoover Will Help Win," Literary Digest, LIX (June 2, 1917), 1689.

both major political parties were forced to recognize his availability.⁷ After months of indecision, he announced his GOP leanings and faded to favorite-son status.⁸ Hoover, desiring a cabinet post, permitted the boom to run its course in order to maximize his bargaining powers after the election.⁹ He utilized this political maneuver time and again during the 1920's and 1930's.

From his 1920 experience, Hoover learned that "an amateur organization, led by close friends, was no match for the professionals." Too, he concluded that his independence worried party politicians.¹⁰ He decided to construct a base

⁷Louis B. Wehle, Hidden Threads of History (New York, 1953), 81-86, discusses the support of a Hoover-Roosevelt ticket and the popularity of the Food Administrator within Democratic circles. Paul Glad, "Progressives and the Business Culture of the 1920's," Journal of American History, LIII (June, 1966), 75-89, says that Hoover, like most politicians, used the progressives' rhetoric and gained their support because "he talked like one of them." See H.H.'s Memoirs, II, 40-56.

⁸C. H. Cramer, Newton D. Baker (Cleveland, 1961), 213, notes Baker's depiction of H.H. as "a political schizophrenic" who barely decided which party to join.

⁹Warren, Great Depression, 25.

¹⁰Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 303. French Strother, "Herbert Hoover," World's Work, XXXIX (1920), 578, notes that the loyalty of Hoover's lieutenants was "almost a form of worship." This loyalty would be significant in the future. Walter E. Edge, A Jerseyman's Journal (Princeton, 1948), 121, 145, notes that H.H. represented the "independent voters." Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours (New York, 1933), 306, 377, recalls that "no big league politician" supported him because of his irregularity and his League views. Theodore Burton, an Ohio Republican leader, admired H.H. because of his apolitical stance. Forrest Crissey, Theodore E. Burton: American Statesman (Cleveland, 1956), 325. Warren, Great Depression, 25, 256, points to the opposition of Watson, Fess, and other Old Guard politicians.

in the center of the party for his future operations.¹¹ As one veteran observer recalls, "it was probably not chance that placed so many enthusiastic backers in the gallery" in 1920.¹²

"Unlike most defeated candidates, [Hoover] revived his political availability by serving in the Harding and Coolidge cabinets."¹³ He continued to enjoy a popular press.¹⁴ Aside from his activist role as Secretary of Commerce, Hoover gained invaluable publicity through the efforts of George Akerson, an astute political reporter who served as his private secretary. Akerson embellished the Hoover image and aided in the construction of a personal machine. In this latter effort, Walter F. Brown, "the former Toledo political boss" and Bull Mooser, who served under Hoover in the Commerce Department, emerged as a permanent ally.¹⁵

With President Coolidge's August statement, the

¹¹Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 306-307, emphasizes H.H.'s middle position. Warren, Great Depression, viii, labels H.H. a "terrapin Progressive" who was "too progressive for the conservatives and too conservative for the radicals." For similar conclusions, see Moos, Republicans, 382, and David Burner, The Politics of Provincialism (New York, 1967), 193-197.

¹²Warren, Great Depression, 25.

¹³James W. Davis, Presidential Primaries (New York, 1967), 100-101. For Hoover's maneuvers to gain a cabinet post, see Shannon, Between the Wars, 34-38; Selig Adler, The Uncertain Giant (New York, 1965), 48; Murray, The Harding Era, 98-99; and H.H., himself, in Memoirs, II, 36.

¹⁴Nelsen, "Hoover Press Image," 199-205.

¹⁵Warren, Great Depression, 31.

coterie of Hoover disciples burst into public activity. Brown and Theodore Burton of Ohio, Ogden Mills, Edgar Rickard, and Alan Fox of New York, and Mark Requa of California mobilized Hoover forces at the state level.¹⁶ Professionals like Colonel R. G. Creager of Texas, as well as Perry Howard, the Negro boss in Mississippi, and national committeeman Ben J. Davis of Georgia, all played key roles. C. Bascom Slemph of Virginia, a onetime Coolidge secretary brought blocs of Southern delegates into the Hoover camp.¹⁷ Although Old Guard leaders attempted to impede the Hoover drive, it was

¹⁶Hoover, Memoirs, II, 191. With the exception of Burton, all these war-relief associates remained close to their Chief throughout their lives.

¹⁷Moos, The Republicans, 370-371; Mayer, The Republicans, 404. Hoover's Southern strategy attempted to soft-pedal his Negro support and win the endorsement of Democratic dissidents who resented Al Smith's urban, "wet," and Catholic associations. Paul Lewinson, Race, Class and Party (New York, 1932), 154-175, credits Hoover with objectively working both sides of the street. Hoover, as a moderate, urged a lowering of white primary restrictions and fully recognized the "black and tan" organizations in dispensing patronage. Yet, not content with Negro support alone, he tried to broaden the base of the Dixie GOP. William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt And The New Deal, 1932-1940 (New York, 1963), 185, points to H.H.'s popularity with Negro voters and his maintenance of their support even in 1932. Ernest M. Collins, "Cincinnati Negroes and Presidential Politics," Journal of Negro History, XLI (April, 1956), 132-133, shows that H.H.'s totals in Negro districts swelled to a record high of seventy-one per cent in 1932. See Elbert Lee Tatum, The Changed Political Thought of the Negro, 1915-1940 (New York, 1951), 101-104. Other observers have castigated Hoover's 1928 strategy because it sacrificed the Negro on the political altar. Viorst, Puritan Ethic, 164-166; Schlesinger, Old Order, 427; and Richard L. Watson, Jr., "The Defeat of Judge Parker: A Study in Pressure Groups and Politics," MVHR, L (September, 1963), 213-234.

too late.¹⁸

In spite of the leaders' qualms over Hoover's political abilities, he adroitly played their game as evidenced by his belated endorsement from Pennsylvania's "Boss" Vare and Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon.¹⁹ Too, Hoover tried to entice George Norris of Nebraska into the vice-presidential spot. When the liberal wing failed to rally around Hoover, he turned to the conservative Senate cabal and selected Charles Curtis of Kansas as his running mate.²⁰ Hoover's selection of Hubert Work as National Chairman demonstrated his intention to lead the Party.²¹

In his 1928 campaign, Hoover held to the center of the political spectrum. It was "neither progressive, nor

¹⁸Mayer, The Republicans, 402, 414; Moos, The Republicans, 382; and Degler, "Ordeal of Hoover," 580.

¹⁹Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 201. Although H. L. Mencken, Making A President (New York, 1932), 23-25, exaggerates H.H.'s political ability, he underlines the candidate's success in corralling the Negro vote, the support of the Ohio Gang, the Anti-Saloon League, and the Mellon and Vare machines. For Vare's role, see William S. Vare, My Forty Years in Politics (Philadelphia, 1933), 184-186, and Morton Keller, In Defense of Yesterday (New York, 1958), 123-135, 200. Thomas L. Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder (Princeton, 1940), 224, 291, sees Mellon's endorsement of H. H. as the turning point. Stokes describes H.H. as a "poor politician" who "swept vainly against the tide. The smart politician rides with it." Hereinafter cited as Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder.

²⁰Roy V. Peel and Thomas C. Donnelly, The 1928 Campaign (New York, 1931), 21-30. Hereinafter cited as Peel and Donnelly, 1928 Campaign.

²¹Moos, The Republicans, 373-374. Work, the Secretary of Interior, was a minor figure even in Coolidge's undistinguished cabinet.

conservative."²² Although Hoover's campaign included the usual chicanery and ambivalence, at times he revealed a surprising candor concerning his beliefs and intentions. His "New Day" addresses promised constructive legislation on the tariff, agriculture, conservation, and public works. Significantly, he reaffirmed his devotion to "American Individualism."²³

On June 14, 1928, at the Republican National Convention, Hoover spoke optimistically of the future. He called for moral leadership. Regarding the role of government he said: "[It] is more than administration; it is power for leadership and cooperation with the forces of business and cultural life in the city, town, and countryside."²⁴ He saw the Presidency as "the inspiring symbol of all that is highest in America's purposes and ideals."²⁵

In a most revealing speech at West Branch, Iowa, the Republican nominee said: "We must accept what is inevitable in the changes that have taken place. It is fortunate indeed that the principles upon which our government was founded require no alteration to meet these changes."²⁶ Despite this

²²Edgar E. Robinson, The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945 (Philadelphia, 1955), 36-37. See Glad, "Progressives and the Business Culture of the 1920's," 87-89.

²³Warren, Great Depression, 43; Robinson, Roosevelt Leadership, 36-37, 53-54; and Herbert Hoover, The New Day (Stanford, 1928).

²⁴Ibid., 3, 5.

²⁵Ibid., 43.

²⁶Hoover, New Day, 50-51.

notion, Hoover was not entirely inflexible. He saw prosperity and employment as national concerns "which government may contribute to solve."²⁷ For a decade, he had championed efficiency and economy as means to higher living standards. He sincerely believed that his program steered a middle course between business and labor.²⁸

Hoover expected national progress to be attained "by voluntary action assisted with co-operation by the government." The test of the American system was "its capacity to cure its own abuses."²⁹ Hoover recognized the existence of abuses and the need for reform in his repeated warnings of future centralization, government competition with business, bureaucratic excesses, regulation, and challenges to the American system.³⁰

²⁷Ibid., 64, 182-183. Hoover thought that the government could legitimately promote public works, public education, and assist in the fulfillment of general economic goals. He doggedly stuck to these areas during the depression.

²⁸Ibid., 77-81. On page twenty-six of his acceptance speech, H.H. praised labor as a "staunch supporter of American individualism and American institutions." Labor had "steadfastly opposed subversive doctrines from abroad."

²⁹New York Times, October 7, 1928, 1. Even the depression did not alter H.H.'s belief in this principle.

³⁰Hoover, New Day, 155-157, 161, 167, 171-178. H.H. said that proposals "in the winds" would lead to "state socialism" with its ensuing economic intervention, marked by fixed prices, regulated purchases and sales, and the loss of "equality of opportunity." He warned that an expanding bureaucracy would "comprise a political machine at the disposal of the party" in power. He also expressed fear that legislatures might delegate too much power to the executive branches.

During the 1928 campaign, Hoover enunciated firmly held convictions regarding the relation of international economies and social systems to continued prosperity at home.³¹ He said: "Government co-operation in promoting foreign trade is even more important for the future than it has been for the past."³² He defined the relation of American prosperity to international good times and, characteristically, stated that both were "due to the hard-working character and increasing efficiency of our people, and to sound government policies."³³

By the close of the campaign, Hoover's inherent optimism was shining brightly as he spoke of a golden land of opportunity, a country "where [men] enjoy the advantages of wealth, not concentrated in the hands of the few but spread through the lives of all," a land where people, "free from poverty and fear, have the leisure and impulse to seek a fuller life."³⁴ In urging national harmony, he stated, "We are a nation of progressives; we differ as to what is the road to progress."³⁵ Only time revealed the degree of

³¹Ibid., 125 ff. Hoover adopted the international line at Boston, on October 15, 1928. Throughout the 1930's he would define the depression as global.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 126, 139.

³⁴Hoover, New Day, 176. See Robinson, Roosevelt Leadership, 36-37, 47.

³⁵Hoover, New Day, 213. See New York Times, November 5, 1928, 1.

difference dividing the nation in its selection of a means to progress.

Although Hoover had revealed much in his 1928 campaign, he had also concealed certain views. He showed political adroitness in skirting the prohibition issue. Partly, this was due to the fact that "his public utterances were in sharp contrast to strong opinions that he held and expressed in private."³⁶ He was a reluctant "dry" and although he labeled prohibition a "noble experiment," at least in private, he doubted the effort to legislate morality.³⁷ His public stance won him the support of Progressive Senators William E. Borah of Idaho and Smith Brookhart of Iowa.³⁸ Undoubtedly, Hoover's equivocation expanded his November victory margin.³⁹

Although religion influenced many voters in 1928, it did not determine the final verdict. Smith's Catholicism even proved an asset in some urban areas.⁴⁰ The main issues

³⁶Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 301.

³⁷Warren, Great Depression, 45-46. For Hoover's public expressions see his New Day, 29, 104.

³⁸Warren, Great Depression, 43.

³⁹William F. Ogburn and Nell S. Talbot, "A Measurement of the Factors in the Presidential Election of 1928," Social Forces, VIII (December, 1929), 175-183.

⁴⁰Richard A. Watson, "Religion and Politics in Mid-America: Presidential Voting in Missouri, 1928 and 1960," Midcontinent-American Studies Journal, V (Spring, 1964), 33-55. Watson denies the alleged significance of religion in the 1928 campaign and proves that religion even helped Smith in some areas. The Happy Warrior gained 16 per cent in St. Louis and ran better than his two predecessors, even carrying

were Hooverism and prosperity. The majority of the country was Republican in the 1920's, and a dry, rural, dynamic Protestant Democrat could not have defeated Hoover in 1928. To millions of voters, Hoover was the symbol of a new economic opportunity. He encouraged this false notion and momentarily capitalized on it as he crushed Smith by a popular vote of 21,385,413 to 14,980,778. The electoral vote was 444 to eighty-seven.⁴¹ The election concluded, Hoover prepared to implement the program he had outlined in his campaign. In the months ahead his principles would be severely tested.

In his inaugural address, Hoover reiterated his

fundamentalist, supposed anti-Catholic rural Missouri. V. O. Key, Southern Politics (New York, 1949), 318-329, found that in heavy black areas, Democrats stayed with Smith, and Key suggests it was from traditional fear of Republicans and their racial views. Paul A. Carter, "The Other Catholic Candidate: The 1928 Presidential Bid of Thomas J. Walsh," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LV (January, 1964), 1-8, denies the importance of the religious issue by showing that many Democrats who opposed Smith favored Catholic Tom Walsh for the nomination. Carter concludes that Smith's ties with the city and his "wet" stance alienated many Democrats.

⁴¹Elmer Davis, "Hoover the Medicine Man," Forum (October, 1930), 198, says that H.H. won "for the same reason that would have led Americans under the age of ten to elect Santa Claus." Samuel Lubell, Revolt of the Moderates (New York, 1956), 34-35, 40-41, 50, 130, 169, 212; Peel and Donnelly, Campaign of 1932, 71, 121-124, review the 1928 issues; Richard Hofstadter, "Could a Protestant Have Beaten Hoover in 1928?" The Reporter (March 17, 1960), 31-33, says that religion worked both ways. To Hofstadter, the fact that Smith outgained H.H. by a million votes minimizes the importance of the religious issue. Burner, Politics of Provincialism, 193-197, notes that H.H. hogged the middle of the road. GOP business policy assured conservative support, while H.H. appealed to progressives as noted in his public endorsement by forty-five of the nation's best-known sixty-six social workers.

determination to maintain the American system, to economize on public expenditures, to reorganize executive agencies, to broaden public works, and to promote equality of opportunity. He indicated that his administration would seek a middle path responsive to all economic interests, controlled by none.⁴²

Hoover's honeymoon as President was short. Six months after he assumed the presidency, the stock market crashed, and soon thereafter, business stagnated and unemployment lines elongated. The Great Depression was a new problem in its complexity, its depth, its duration. The poverty it evoked was also new.⁴³ The times demanded an aggressive, practical politician, whereas Hoover was a cautious, idealistic, political neophyte. His disdain for politics, politicians, and the political traditions surfaced at the very moment he needed the support of his congressional and party leaders. He not only refused to recognize the basic political amenities, he insisted on drafting detailed depression policies and then submitting them to Congress without even elucidating his own congressional leaders.⁴⁴ Possibly

⁴²Cong. Rec., 71 Cong., Spec. Sess. (March 4, 1929), 4-7.

⁴³Romasco, Poverty of Abundance, 3. Harris G. Warren's Herbert Hoover And The Great Depression is the best study on Hoover's depression policies.

⁴⁴Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 98-116. Hargrove's is a superb analysis of H.H.'s executive assets and liabilities. See Viorst, Puritan Ethic, 165-170; Warren,

his professional training, his years in war relief activities, and his power as Commerce Secretary had accustomed him to handing down orders.

Although his ideological framework severely limited his actions, Hoover pursued what at times must be called an activist policy.⁴⁵ His legislative proposals invariably emphasized "voluntary compliance rather than government coercion" and involved state and local direction.⁴⁶ He not only offended Congress, he also alienated the press. Since he deeply resented criticism, he played favorites among the reporters and on occasions tried to muzzle various topics. His efforts to minimize the depression were carried to an extreme and stirred serious doubts concerning his program. His failure to mold public opinion proved to be his most

Great Depression, 60-62, notes the GOP division in Congress and H.H.'s failure to recognize the threat the insurgents posed for his political control; Dixon Wecter, The Age of the Great Depression, 1929-1941 (New York, 1948), 40-45, notes that H.H. lacked "political camaraderie, communicable personal warmth [or] thrilling leadership." As Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 107-108, says, H.H. refused "to employ a strategy of manipulative leadership in Congress" because such action conflicted with his values.

⁴⁵Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 98.

⁴⁶Ibid., 100-101. See Warren, Great Depression, 53, 114; Victor L. Albjerg, "Hoover: The Presidency in Transition," Current History, XXXIX (October, 1960), 213-219, sees H.H. as gradually moving toward an activist role, expanding federal power and assuming responsibility for solving the depression. To Albjerg, Hoover was "the last of the old-type chief executives, and the first of the new."

serious mistake.⁴⁷

Even when Hoover found positive solutions to the nation's problems, the necessity of political action or an infringement on his ideology would result in an impasse. A typical example was his Research Committee on Social Trends. As the epitome of his convictions and experience, this group of distinguished economists, sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists met as a committee, exchanged a magnitude of information, exhibited a cooperative spirit, related facts, and proposed a variety of reforms in their monumental Recent Social Trends of the United States. As their reforms relied on a forceful federal implementation and would necessitate political action, Hoover neglected to capitalize on their efforts.⁴⁸

In a series of conferences, Hoover called on the nation's economic leaders, its agricultural experts, and its policy advisers. Despite his energy and his sincerity, his insistence that all agreements and programs be cemented by a

⁴⁷Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 103-107. To Hargrove, H.H.'s inability to dramatize his efforts led to an inevitable conclusion that he was doing nothing. He failed to elicit either party or public loyalty because he spoke of facts and figures and ignored the emotional or personal side of the public.

⁴⁸Barry D. Karl, "Presidential Planning and Social Science Research: Mr. Hoover's Experts," Perspectives in American History, III (1969), 347-409.

voluntary cooperation and self-regulation assured defeat.⁴⁹

Hoover's inflexibility and ideological imprisonment were repeatedly reflected in his policies. Since he viewed the farmer as an individualist who could control his own destiny with a minimum of federal assistance, Hoover's Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929 established a Federal Farm Board with limited powers, dependent on the voluntary cooperation of individual farmers. The Board could purchase surpluses thus stabilizing prices during abnormal periods. The fallacy was evident when surpluses continued to mount and prices continued to fall.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 111-112, 115. As Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 566, 573-575, points out, H.H. was acting positively in pressing business-labor leaders to freeze wages, prices, and jobs at existing levels. The voluntary codes served as blueprints for the NRA. On this latter point, see Wecter, Great Depression, 55; Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 112; and Walter Lippmann, "The Permanent New Deal," Yale Review, XXIV (June, 1935), 649-667. Also see Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 301; Warren, Great Depression, 118-119; and Paul Conkin, The New Deal (New York, 1967), 28.

⁵⁰Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 32-37; Warren, Great Depression, 168-172; Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 154-157, 167, 182-187; Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 109-110; Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 305-306. Fusfeld, Origins of The New Deal, 225, and John D. Hicks and Theodore Saloutos, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939 (Madison, 1951), 452, 556-557, conclude that H.H.'s farm program furnished the base for the New Deal agricultural program. Hoover himself, in State Papers, I, 34, reaffirmed the importance of methods in seeking recovery. He said that bureaucratic domination of farmers would be a disaster and that voluntarism was a necessity. He never accepted the idea of regulation. See James H. Shideler, "Herbert Hoover and the Federal Farm Board Project," MVHR, XLII (Fall, 1956), 710-729. For the rest of his life, H.H. never deviated from his belief that agriculture was basically sound.

Hoover's political liabilities surfaced in the fight to revise the tariff. He split his party ranks, lost control of his Congressional majority, and then fell silent at the crucial moment. The Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act of June 15, 1930, a most controversial bill, reflected a selfish nationalism in raising duties on limitless items and negating international trade to an extent that other countries followed suit.⁵¹ The President ignored the pleas for a veto and signed the bill.⁵² Newspapers began to talk of a "weak and indecisive" President.⁵³

In an effort to expand credit, Hoover approved the establishment of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to loan money to banks, railroads, and insurance companies. In his mind, the RFC's aim was assistance, not substitution, for private enterprise. Too, the program was consistent with his philosophy, for the loans were to be repaid and it was assumed they would lubricate the economy through increased

⁵¹Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 109-110, and Walter Lippmann, "The Peculiar Weakness of Mr. Hoover," 3, agree that the President was at his worst on the tariff fight and that he allowed the Old Guard to outmaneuver him. Also see George E. Mowry, "The Uses of History by Recent Presidents," MVHR, LII (June, 1966), 8-9; Warren, Great Depression, 84-97; Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 167, 182-187; and Thomas A. Bailey, Presidential Greatness (New York, 1966), 142, 152.

⁵²Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 110; Warren, Great Depression, 88-91.

⁵³Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 110.

works projects, home loans, and agricultural credits.⁵⁴ The President also insisted on a reduction in government expenses and a new effort to balance the budget.⁵⁵ Although Hoover recommended tax increases and a manufacturing tax, Congressional amendments negated his plan.⁵⁶ Reluctantly, the President stretched his ideology to the point of approving federal loans to the states for relief purposes.⁵⁷ As federal plans began to transgress the invisible lines of state and local powers, even on a temporary basis, Hoover reached the end of his string. Although he had promised "the aid of every resource of the Federal Government" should

⁵⁴Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 568-573, 582. Degler notes the influence of the War Finance Corporation of World War I in the creation of the RFC. It should be pointed out that Hoover saw even the RFC as a temporary establishment which would pass from the scene with the termination of the depression. As Hofstadter, Political Tradition, 303, and Golob, The "Isms," 122, note, H.H. expected the RFC to facilitate business recovery, but on its own initiative. The best analysis of the "trickle-down" theory is found in Warren, Great Depression, 34-37, 67-71, 143-147, 155-158. Two observers thought the RFC marked the beginning of the New Deal. Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 309, and an article, "New Deal's Seeds," Literary Digest, CXVII (June 23, 1934), 12. On the RFC, see Eugene Meyer, "From Laissez Faire With William Graham Sumner to the RFC," Public Policy, V (1954), 3-27, and Gerald Nash, "Herbert Hoover And The Origins of the RFC," MVHR, XLVI (December, 1959), 455, 468. Both observers conclude that H.H. reluctantly agreed to the creation of the RFC.

⁵⁵Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 568-569, 582.

⁵⁶Ibid., 573; Warren, Great Depression, 158-162.

⁵⁷The Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932 created a fund of \$300,000,000 which the RFC loaned to the states to relieve the unemployed. Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 571-572; Warren, Great Depression, 141-147, 206-207.

the emergency necessitate it, he expressed confidence that such a day would never come.⁵⁸ In Hoover's mind, it never did.

In the field of labor, Hoover spoke of individuals searching for their own destiny. He bitterly opposed "closed shops" and reluctantly signed the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 which outlawed yellow-dog contracts and curtailed the power of the courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes. Yet, he defended the necessity and right to unionize. He hoped for a cooperative and classless labor spirit and praised unions for stabilizing "our institutions in their fight against red radicalism."⁵⁹

On the positive side, Hoover repeatedly demonstrated his administrative skills. His federal court appointments were commendable.⁶⁰ He effected a thorough reorganization

⁵⁸Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 376. Concerning H.H.'s fear of destroying individual initiative, emasculating state and local agencies, and politics in relief, see Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 20-24; Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 573-575; Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 375; and Hofstadter, Political Tradition, 307.

⁵⁹Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 60-64. See Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 118, 121, and Milton Derber (ed.), Labor and the New Deal (Madison, 1957), 182-183, for varying evaluations of H.H.'s labor policy. Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 565, 575, concludes that the New Deal did not better H.H.'s record since unemployment remained around ten million while production levels of 1939 were even lower than in 1929.

⁶⁰Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 115. Arthur B. Tourtellot, An Anatomy of American Politics (New York, 1950), 140. H.H. appointed Charles Evans Hughes, Benjamin Cordozo, and Owen Roberts to the Supreme Court.

of the White House secretariat.⁶¹ He elicited cooperative action by the economic and political elite during the 1930 drought in the Southwest.⁶² As President, Hoover promoted an international moratorium on war debts. In a rare moment, he obtained Congressional approval of his plan.⁶³ He scored victories in his conservation policy and his record-breaking public works programs. Yet, he refused to move beyond certain boundaries.⁶⁴

More and more, he came to play a negative role through his vetoes, his inflexible opposition to direct relief, and his vehement denunciation of public power and social security.⁶⁵ As his pique at Congressional insubordination

⁶¹Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 114-115.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Warren, Great Depression, 131-136; Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 408-410; Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 315-316. As an internationalist in his economic thinking, H.H. saw the complexity and interdependency of war debts, credits, bond issues, and other economic ties. The moratorium was to last for one year, July, 1931, to July, 1932. Congress refused to consider cancellation. Warren, Great Depression, 132-136.

⁶⁴On conservation, see Franklin L. Burdette (ed.), Readings For Republicans (New York, 1960), 177; Warren, Great Depression, 63-65; Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 216; and Noggle, Teapot Dome, 209-210. In Origins of the New Deal, 225, Daniel Fusfeld sees H.H. breaking with his philosophy in pushing the federal government's involvement in conservation. In public works projects, Hoover spent over two billion dollars and secured employment for a million men. Warren, Great Depression, 66-67, and Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 566-567.

⁶⁵Romasco, Poverty of Abundance, 231-232, 229.

accelerated, he pulled the most unpardonable faux pas and accused Congress of irresponsibility.⁶⁶ With a careless disregard for restraint, he attempted to create a psychology of confidence at the worst possible moment during the depression.⁶⁷ Once he lost the public, his admonitions that the nation's greatest problem was fear passed unheard.⁶⁸ Time was running out.

Bonus Expeditionary Force veterans of World War I marched on Washington in the summer of 1932. Accompanied by their families and unemployed dissidents, the veterans poured into the capital city and insisted on the long-promised bonus payments. When Congress refused, some stragglers settled in the slummish Anacostia Flats. Fearful of the security risk, Hoover decided to remove the temporary residents and sent in federal troops to implement his plan. The army was over-zealous in its task and violence occurred. As Hoover feared, the incident with its political overtones left

⁶⁶Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 111.

⁶⁷Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 301. Davis notes that H.H.'s "public utterances were in sharp contrast to strong opinions that he held and expressed in private." Warren, Great Depression, 114, agrees.

⁶⁸Warren, Great Depression, 114; Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 575, 589; Hofstadter, Political Tradition, 301.

a decided bitterness in the minds of many voters.⁶⁹

Although Hoover's attitudes on public power and social security conformed to his ideology, they did not increase his political appeal. Moreover, his insinuations concerning the patriotism of his opponents added no lustre to his own image. In vetoing the Muscle Shoals Bill, he called it "the negation of the ideals on opportunity upon which our civilization has been based."⁷⁰ As to social security, there were "no short cuts." This individual matter must be resolved "upon a cult of work, not a cult of

⁶⁹A recent study of the Bonus Army episode and its political significance, based on manuscript materials, holds General Douglas MacArthur responsible for the initial blunder but points to H.H.'s political insensibility as the cause for the enlargement and detonation of the situation. Donald J. Lisio, "A Blunder Becomes Catastrophe: Hoover, the Legion, and the Bonus Army," Wisconsin Magazine of History, LI (Autumn, 1967), 37-50. See Warren, Great Depression, 227-236; Schlesinger, Old Order, 257-267; Hoover, Memoirs, III, 225-232. Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York, 1964), 94-97, defends the BEF expulsion, whereas Paul Y. Anderson bitterly denounces the President in "Tear Gas, Bayonets, and Votes," Nation, CXXXV (August 17, 1932), 138-139; "Wanted: Strong Men and Radical Measures," Nation, CXXXVI (March 15, 1933), 386-387; and "The End of Herbert Hoover," Nation, CXXXV (November 16, 1932), 470-471.

⁷⁰Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 317; Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 309; Warren, Great Depression, 72-83. H.H. continually opposed government competition with business in the area of public power. The most critical contemporary article on "Hoover and Power," Nation, CXXXIII (August 12, 1931), 151-152, by Amos Pinchot, holds the President with encouraging exploitation of public power resources.

leisure."⁷¹ The President had exhausted every traditional method of checking the slump. By failing in so many areas, by proving the inadequacy of his voluntarism and individualism, he had prepared the way for a New Deal.⁷² For months, ideas and images, rather than realities, had shaped his thought and action.

Hoover alienated his party and the public. Aware of the President's handicaps, professional politicians exhibited "low morale, if not mutiny."⁷³ Only a small clique prepared to defend him.⁷⁴ Notwithstanding, the President's forces controlled the Republican Convention which convened in Chicago in June, 1932. Senator Simeon Fess of Ohio was the Convention Chairman. Senator Lester Dickinson of Iowa was

⁷¹Hoover, Memoirs, II, 312-319; Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 80-82. Although Hoover continued to see social security as an individual matter, his Research Committee on Social Trends outlined most of the 1935 Social Security Act. Warren, Great Depression, 168.

⁷²Romasco, Poverty of Abundance, 229-231-232. Golob, The "Isms," 122, says Hoover was a trail blazer for the New Deal.

⁷³Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph (Boston, 1956), 323-325. See Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 115-117.

⁷⁴Ibid., 365. See Henry L. Stimson, On Active Service: In Peace and War (New York, 1948), 284-285; Ogden Mills, "In Defense of Hoover Policies," Review of Reviews, LXXXVI (August, 1932), 39-40; Vernon Kellogg, "The President As I Know Him," Atlantic Monthly, CL (July, 1932), 1-12; and Mark Sullivan, "The Case for the Administration," Fortune, VI (July, 1932), 34-39, 83-84, 86-88. One observer concludes that the professionals wanted Hoover to serve as scapegoat while they gained control of party machinery. Walter Lippmann, Interpretations, 1931-1932 (New York, 1932), 290.

the keynoter. Mark Requa, Harrison Spangler, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Ernest Jahncke, and Colonel R. G. Creager, all Hooverites, dominated the National Committee. Finally, six cabinet members, including Postmaster General Walter F. Brown, accentuated the Hoover tone of the convention. They readily renominated the President.⁷⁵

Although Hoover had hoped to ignore the campaign, the results of the September election in Maine awakened him to his precarious position.⁷⁶ Thereafter, he not only defended his record but launched an aggressive effort to point up the vacillations of his opponent.⁷⁷

The 1932 campaign was unusually vituperative. Both parties and both candidates exercised little restraint in their personal attacks. Roosevelt stigmatized the President's record as "The Four Horseman--Destruction, Delay, Deceit and Despair."⁷⁸ He accused Hoover of being "indecisive, incompetent, and lacking in leadership."⁷⁹ In his most

⁷⁵Twentieth Republican National Convention (New York, 1932), 7, 18-20, 226, 327. For Hoover's acceptance speech see pp. 247-263. H. L. Mencken, Making A President, 45-48, says Larry Richey guarded the convention for H.H., while Dickinson, the Iowa keynoter, "an old-time political hack of the cow state model," howled "his canned speech in a loud and hearty manner."

⁷⁶Freidel, FDR, The Triumph, 325, 365. H.H. informed Stimson that the GOP would lose every state west of the Alleghenies. Stimson, On Active Service, 284-285.

⁷⁷Warren, Great Depression, 256.

⁷⁸Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York, 1938), I, 831.

⁷⁹Warren, Great Depression, 260.

ironic speech, FDR denounced Hoover's "novel, radical and unorthodox economic theories" and promised to reduce federal expenditures by twenty-five per cent if he were elected. He dubbed Hoover's policies as "the most reckless and extravagant . . . of any peacetime Government, anywhere, any time."⁸⁰

Hoover, remembering his uncle's sagacious advice, had turned the other cheek and now determined to give as good as he would receive. By September his bitterness surfaced when he denounced the opposition for advocating "a social philosophy different from the traditional one."⁸¹ He called FDR "a chameleon on plaid" and publicly questioned the nominee's patriotism.⁸² Following his example, Republican orators said that the "new deal" was a "shuffle," a deal "from the bottom of the deck," and so many "stacked cards."⁸³ Both candidates would well remember this campaign.

Despite Hoover's warning that the contest was one "between two philosophies of government" and that his defeat would lead to the destruction of "the very foundations of

⁸⁰Rosenman (ed.), FDR Papers, I, 795-812. H.H.'s pique accelerated at the zealous character assassination by Charley Michelson's well-oiled propaganda machine. Irwin, Propaganda And The News (New York, 1936), 290-300; Allen, Since Yesterday, 31.

⁸¹Burns, Lion and Fox, 139-145.

⁸²Moley, After 7 Years, 64.

⁸³Ibid.; Peel and Donnelly, 1932 Campaign, 147-148; Don Lohbeck, Patrick J. Hurley (Chicago, 1956), 127, 133, 136.

our American system,"⁸⁴ the voters were more impressed by their meager pay checks, the soup kitchens, and bread lines; they yearned for change.⁸⁵ To them, Hoover symbolized the depression, its incongruity, its confusion.⁸⁶ His rejection was decisive. Only six states with fifty-nine electoral votes sustained the incumbent President. He polled 15,759,930 popular votes to FDR's 22,815,539. The Democrats gained control of both houses of Congress.⁸⁷ In his congratulatory telegram to Roosevelt, the President promised "every possible helpful effort."⁸⁸ The Interregnum had begun.

The battle scars of the campaign were deep and open.

⁸⁴New York Times, November 1, 1932. See Fusfeld, Origins of the New Deal, 249-250. To H.H., the election would determine the direction of American society for "over a century to come." Hoover, Memoirs, III, 343.

⁸⁵Elmer Davis, "Hoover and Hubris," New Republic, LXXIII (November 16, 1934), 7-9; Wecter, Great Depression, 51. See Walter Lippmann, "A Reckoning: Twelve Years of Republican Rule," Yale Review, XXI (Summer, 1932), 647-660. As Peel and Donnelly, 1932 Campaign, 122, 179, note, anyone could have beaten H.H.

⁸⁶Burns, Lion and Fox, 144; Louis Adamic, My America, 1928-1938 (New York, 1932), 304.

⁸⁷New York Times, November 9-10, 1932, 1. E. Francis Brown, "Roosevelt's Victorious Campaign," Current History, XXXVII (December, 1932), 257-265; Peel and Donnelly, 1932 Campaign, 215-225; Samuel Lubell, Future of American Politics (New York, 1951), 34-35, 42-43, 49-51, 169-170, 176, 212. Samuel J. Eldersveld, "The Influence of Metropolitan Party Pluralities in Presidential Elections Since 1920," Political Science Review, XLIII (December, 1949), 1189-1206. According to Eldersveld, metropolitan pluralities were the decisive factor in 1932 and thereafter. Also see James M. Cox, Journey Through My Years (New York, 1946), 340-341.

⁸⁸New York Times, November 9, 1932, 1.

Yet, the President pressed Roosevelt for a conference. Whether motivated by personal, political, or nationalistic reasons, the two men met and discussed the nation's problems.⁸⁹ After gaining no satisfaction from the President-elect, Hoover submitted his own program to Congress in December. When the Lame Duck Congress failed to act, he accused it of playing politics.⁹⁰

In January, the nation struck a new nadir. The Lame Duck Congress, inclined toward obstruction, accelerated its negative action by overriding the President's vetoes and by forcing publication of the RFC loans. Roosevelt denounced the President's sales tax proposals and the second Roosevelt-Hoover conference failed to accomplish anything tangible. As unemployment, labor strikes, and farm revolts accelerated,

⁸⁹Henry Esli Everman, "The Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum: November, 1932-March, 1933" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 1965), 24, 38-64, 152-153. Hereinafter cited as Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum." Hoover hoped to enact his anti-depression ideas by working through the President-elect. FDR's noncommittal attitude incensed Hoover. Concerning the November meeting, see Moley, After 7 Years, 68-77; Hoover, Memoirs, III, 178-183; New York Times, November 13, 15, 18, and 23, 1932, 1; and Time, XX (December 5, 1932), 9-10.

⁹⁰Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum," 64-87, 152-153. For H.H.'s proposals to Congress, see House Journal, 72 Cong., 2 Sess. (December, 1932), 40-43; Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 338-340; Literary Digest, CXIV (December 17, 1932), 1-2; New York Times, December 5-8, 1932, 1; and E. Pendleton Herring, "Second Session of the Seventy-Second Congress," American Political Science Review, CCLXXI (1933), 404-421. Also see Hoover, Memoirs, III, 185-193; Rosenman (ed.), FDR Papers, I, 879-884; Timmons, Garner of Texas, 172; and New York Times, December 21-23, 30-31, 1932, 1.

the nation approached paralysis.⁹¹

Before Hoover escaped his ordeal the Senate Finance Committee's exposure of scandalous banking practices destroyed the remnant of confidence in financial institutions. The banking system collapsed and the economy touched bottom.⁹² Both Hoover and Roosevelt must share the responsibility for the failures of the Interregnum. "They were like two small boys--selfish, suspicious, and guilty."⁹³ While FDR seemed perfectly willing to allow the nation to hit bottom, Hoover was equally determined that any recovery would be in line with his own ideological views. As the President informed Senator Dave Reed, FDR's acquiescence in the Hoover proposals would have amounted to the ratification of "the whole major program of the Republican Administration" and assured the abandonment of "90% of the so-called New Deal."⁹⁴

⁹¹Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum," 76-93, 134. See Moley, After 7 Years, 95-96; New York Times, January 19-22, 27-28, 1933, 1; Hoover, Memoirs, III, 198; and Cong. Rec., 72 Cong., 2 Sess. (January 4, 1933), 1361-62, 1372.

⁹²Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum," 109, 143, 154-156. New York Times, February 2-9, 16-26, 1933, 1; Commercial and Financial Chronicle, February 18, 1933, 1133-1139, and February 25, 1933, 1244; Moley, After 7 Years, 140-144; and Lawrence Sullivan, Prelude to Panic (Washington, 1936), 91-117.

⁹³Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum," 161.

⁹⁴Hoover to Reed, February 20, 1933, K-107, Herbert Hoover Papers, Post-Presidential Individual File, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. Hereinafter all letters in the Hoover Papers will be designated by box number. Only letters outside the Hoover collection will be designated more fully by paper, and by location.

Although Congress abetted the national slump, Hoover's ideology was the greatest handicap.⁹⁵ The President abandoned many of his own convictions, even if on a temporary basis, but he would go only so far. Too, he avoided enforcement of most of his policies. Hoover rationalized his position as the only correct and permissible one.⁹⁶

The retiring President was in no mood to accept defeat. He wanted vindication for his ideas and for his administration. At long last he saw the potential utility of political parties. The Republican Party "must be a party of ideals since only exalted purpose can bring great numbers of people together in united action. But the consummation of ideals must be organized."⁹⁷ For the moment he recognized that all Americans must cooperate with the new Administration in its depression efforts. Yet, Republicans had a national obligation to "subject all proposals to the scrutiny of

⁹⁵The recalcitrant legislators, not without guile, ignored the President's soundest recommendations, refused to appropriate funds, continued publication of RFC loans, and later passed many of Hoover's proposals after his departure. For example: reduced veteran's benefits, federal pay cuts, and executive reorganization. Everman, "Hoover-Roosevelt Interregnum," 156-159.

⁹⁶For an analysis of Hoover's violations of his own credo and his rationalization of such steps, see Schlesinger, Old Order, 246. Also see Hargrove, Presidential Leadership, 112; Golob, The "Isms," 110-121; Fusfeld, Origins of a New Deal, 224-227, 255.

⁹⁷Hoover to Everett Sanders, February 27, 1933, K-108. Sanders was the Republican National Chairman.

constructive debate and to oppose" those which were unwise.⁹⁸ As Hoover retired into his sanctuary, he genuinely was relieved by the escape from political pressures.⁹⁹ However, for a man with his ideological framework, his endless energy, and his personal frustration, sanctuary would provide only a temporary respite.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Morison, Turmoil and Tradition, 334, notes that H.H., a Quaker, frequently sought "sanctuary for the inner light." Degler, "Hoover Ordeal," 578-579, quotes H.H. as saying: "All the money in the world could not induce me to live over the last nine months. The conditions we have experienced make this office a compound hell."

CHAPTER III

SANCTUARY

The tension between Hoover's ideas and reality aggravated his frustration during the Interregnum and quickened his irritability and deep-seated resentment. Yet, from his own experience he recognized the gravity of the situation and determined to give ground, even urging his party to cooperate with Roosevelt in every effort to promote recovery. He was not, however, abdicating the responsibility of a loyal opposition.¹

"Saturday, March 4, dawned gray and bleak. Heavy winter clouds hung over the city. A chill northwest wind brought brief gusts of rain."² On Inaugural Day, even the

¹For example, H.H. wrote Everett Sanders, February 27, 1933, K-108, urging a cooperative policy with the reservation that the New Deal not violate the Constitution, that credit be maintained, that the currency remain sound, and that "equality of opportunity" continue. See New York Times, February 28, 1933, 1; "President Hoover's Farewell Address," Literary Digest, CXV (February 25, 1933), 9; Rexford Tugwell, The Brains Trust (New York, 1968), xxii; and Hoover Collection, LXIII, Item 2133. The latter, consisting of bound volumes located at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, includes originals and copies of various Hoover addresses, telegrams, magazine articles, press statements, and newspaper clippings.

²Schlesinger, Old Order, 1.

weather accentuated the sombre atmosphere that pervaded the faces of the quiet crowds lining Pennsylvania Avenue.³ For millions this inauguration was more than a change of administrations. It was the passing of traditionalism.

Hoover felt mixed emotions at the surrender of power. In spite of his alleged relief, he recalled later that "Democracy [was] not a polite employer."⁴ Hoover, after all, had become accustomed to wielding power. His personality now would require vindication for his discredited policies. Retirement, at best, would be difficult.

On leaving Washington, Hoover, "neglected, exhausted, and deeply disappointed,"⁵ embarked for New York. There, he renewed old ties and recuperated from his depression ordeal.⁶ In accord with his public bipartisan stance, the former President urged "whole-hearted support and cooperation of every citizen" with Roosevelt when the President, on March 6, issued a proclamation closing all banks. Hoover also upheld the President's March 9 message to Congress concerning Bank

³New York Times, March 5, 1933, 1.

⁴Hoover, Memoirs, III, 344.

⁵Raymond Moley, 27 Masters of Politics (New York, 1949), 25. Hereinafter cited as Moley, 27 Masters.

⁶Theodore G. Joslin, Hoover Off The Record (New York, 1934), 366-367. Hereinafter cited as Joslin, Off the Record. Hoover acknowledged man's desire to escape from world problems throughout his book, Fishing For Fun--And To Wash Your Soul (New York, 1963), 18.

Rehabilitation.⁷ Too, Hoover's own fiscal advisers helped to draft the Emergency Banking Bill which provided "for inspection and certification of soundness." Although the act, passed on March 9, probably forestalled creation of a nationalized banking system,⁸ Hoover privately was "not reconciled to the present banking program" and endorsed it solely because he thought there should be "no criticism of the new administration."⁹

Following a holiday in New York, Hoover left for his home in Palo Alto. On March 21, responding to reporters and enthusiastic well-wishers, he stated: "On economic and political questions I am silent. I have no plans for the future."¹⁰ Hoover, undoubtedly, was at a loss as to what to do with his new freedom. His loyal Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, ably expressed the difficulty in adjusting to the "sudden cessation of duties" and his "sympathy of how

⁷Hoover Collections, LXIII, Items 2136, 2137; and New York Times, March 7, March 10, 1933, 1. H.H. applauded Senator Dave Reed's efforts to unite the GOP behind the Banking Bill and later the Economy Bill. Hoover to Reed, March 10, 1933, and Reed to Hoover, March 14, 1933, K-107.

⁸New York Times, March 10, 1933, 1; and Conkin, New Deal, 46. Arthur A. Ballantine, in "When All The Banks Closed," Harvard Business Review, XXVI (1948), 138-139, states that he joined Ogden Mills, and George L. Harrison of the Federal Reserve in planning the banking bill.

⁹Hoover to Stimson, March 14, 1933, K-129.

¹⁰"Hoover at Home, Wants 'Long Rest,'" New York Times, March 22, 1933, as found in Hoover Collection, LXIII, Item 2139.

immensely harder it must have been" for the ex-President.¹¹

Hoover, gradually recovering his "normal equipoise," wrote to Stimson, two months after retirement, that "the Washington combination of Coué--P. T. Barnum--W. J. Bryan--Carl [sic] Marx--Moody and Sankey" was keeping him entertained.¹² The former President, perhaps from boredom, had in truth devoted much of his energy and time to Stanford University, the Huntington Library, and other educational institutions. He also dedicated bridges and dams and canvassed his friends for donations to benevolent organizations. These activities necessitated trips eastward and swelled his growing interest in politics.¹³ His travels, coupled with his extensive correspondence, enabled him to keep abreast of the developments in Washington in spite of his alleged retirement to Palo Alto.¹⁴

¹¹Stimson to Hoover, April 10, 1933, and May 13, 1933, K-129. Stimson said: "I have felt so useless for the past two months."

¹²Hoover to Stimson, May 16, 1933, and Stimson to Hoover, May 24, 1933, K-129.

¹³New York Times, July 10, 1933, 1, in the Hoover Collection, LXIII, Item 2143; New York Times, February 3, 1934; and Wolfe, Hoover, 359. Also see "How the Former President Spends His Time," Literary Digest, CXVI (August 5, 1933), 34.

¹⁴Wolfe, Hoover, 358-359. Certain Hoover lieutenants kept their "Chief" posted on the minutest details of local political circles. For example, see Harrison Spangler to Hoover, October 9, 1933, K-127; Will Irwin to Hoover, October 23, 1933, K-61; Alan Fox to Hoover, July 26, September 17, and October 3, 1934, K-39. H.H.'s inner circle, heavily loaded with relief associates, affectionately called him "Chief."

As months passed, the former President gave more and more time to politics. At no time in his past career had Hoover worked so relentlessly in attempting to acquire political information, to curry favor, or to construct a phalanx of support as he did in the spring of 1933. He garnered political news at local, state, and regional levels. He corresponded with virtually every geographical, ethnic, racial, and economic bloc in American society. As his correspondence of the 1930's so abundantly attests, he was attempting to justify his position and recover his pre-depression support.¹⁵ Although he once stated that former presidents spent their time "taking pills and dedicating libraries,"¹⁶ he obviously had more important goals.

During the 1930's and afterwards, his correspondence fell primarily into two categories: letters and telegrams from like-minded individuals who expressed dissatisfaction with the New Deal and praise for Hooverian ideas and values; and letters from the great coterie of lieutenants, long-trained in loyalty to the "Chief," who often indicated a certain intellectual submissiveness as much as they did agreement or understanding.¹⁷

¹⁵See H.H.'s voluminous personal correspondence in the Post-Presidential Individual File, 1933-1940.

¹⁶Bill Adler, Presidential Wit (New York, 1966), 126.

¹⁷An inveterate Hoover critic, Rexford Tugwell, in Brains Trust, 499, says that H.H. was "surrounded by unusually sychophantic associates with blunted perceptions" who kept him "in ignorance" and insensitive to public

Hoover's correspondence was heavily stacked. It reflected images as well as realities. It failed to present the whole picture because those who wrote him, generally, were already in agreement with his basic ideas. Even the "inside" information from Washington was distinctly shaped by an oppositionist frame of mind. As thousands of letters accumulated, criticizing the New Deal, Hoover became slack in his objectivity. He assumed that all people shared his disillusionment with the New Deal and its excessive spending, inefficiency, corruption, regimentation, and dictation. Thus, he discounted the evidence of its popular appeal. Having distinct and firm ideas of his own, he readily agreed with New Jersey Senator Walter Edge that "the new administration [was] certainly charting new seas,"¹⁸ and with Supreme Court Justice Harlan F. Stone, who wrote that "to judge by the rapidity of changing events[,] decades might have passed."¹⁹

opinion. Since H.H. "had withdrawn from those who might warn him . . . he continued to rely on his own defective judgment." In his Memoirs, II, 221, Hoover admits: "I doubt if any President was ever surrounded by men and women of more personal loyalty or devotion to public service." As Joseph Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 310, 314, notes, H.H. "encouraged like-minded advice" and discouraged criticism and pessimism. Too, he "was held in such awe by his subordinates that their loyalty to 'the Chief' too often curbed their critical judgment." Thus H.H. collected letters and articles paying deference, never noticing that the real public tuned on and off at will.

¹⁸Edge to Hoover, April 25, 1933, K-33. Former Secretary of War, Patrick Hurley, also spoke of a "new era." Hurley to Hoover, May 26, 1933, K-60.

¹⁹Stone to Hoover, May 2, 1933, K-130.

To Hoover, revolution was transpiring in the spring of 1933. As he saw it, suppression was obvious. The filtered news incited his greatest fears. He believed the worst and then sought proof. As his lieutenants begged him to return to the political arena, it became more and more difficult to maintain silence. Surprisingly, for almost two years, he resisted the temptation to publicly criticize the New Deal.²⁰

Like their discredited leader, Republican politicians in Washington remained dormant during the early stages of the New Deal. Some politicians adjusted their differences with one another, while others sought a more centralized leadership. All factions of the bitterly divided GOP admitted disunity and lack of direction.²¹

Hoover and his lieutenants scrutinized every New Deal policy and stored a fund of information for future use. Of all Hoover's advisers, the most indispensable was Odgen Mills, the former Secretary of Treasury. The New Yorker was

²⁰The Hoover correspondence of the 1930's abounds in expressions of revolutionary fears, political advise, and criticism of the New Deal. Many of H.H.'s colleagues spoke to him of Roosevelt's "revolution."

²¹Fort to Hoover, May 12, 1933, K-38; Fess to Hoover, June 9, 1933, K-36; William Allen White to Hoover, May 3, 1934, K-137; Hanford MacNider to Arthur Vandenberg, July 3, 1933, Hanford MacNider Papers, Series 5, Box 73, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. Joslin, Off the Record, 340, discusses efforts by the Old Guard to reorganize the National Committee before H.H. even reached California. The majority of committee members, however, sided with the retiring President.

the fiscal expert in the Hoover inner circle.²² As a close friend of Elihu Root and Henry Stimson, Mills, along with Harlan Stone, provided cautious, restrained advice, often more realistic than that which Hoover received so abundantly from his ultra-conservative associates.²³

Mills, in touch with Will Woodin, FDR's Secretary of the Treasury, gleaned valuable "inside" information into New Deal fiscal measures and readily notified Hoover in advance of forthcoming changes. By mid-March, Hoover knew of Roosevelt's decision to use fully "the extraordinary powers" which he, himself, had rejected as unconstitutional.²⁴ The former President, already pessimistic, was agitated at the probability of inflation and wrote Mills in May that the current stock market fluctuations confirmed their darkest forebodings. Hoover urged a firm stand against devaluation of the dollar.²⁵

In his preoccupation with inflation,²⁶ Hoover worried

²²See Claude Bowers, My Life (New York, 1962), 243, 256; and Tugwell, Brains Trust, 480. Tugwell sees Mills as "the most agile and intelligent" of H.H.'s advisors, and as "formidable in the area of federal finance."

²³See the Mills-Hoover exchanges, K-92, and the Stone-Hoover letters, K-130.

²⁴Mills to Hoover, March 13, 1933, and May 2, 1933, K-92. Also see Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, Carter Glass (New York, 1939), 341-342.

²⁵Hoover to Mills, May 7, 1933, and Mills to Hoover, May 2, 1933, K-92.

²⁶Hoover to Brown, April 25, 1933, K-16; Hoover to Kellogg, October 5, 1933, and Kellogg to Hoover, September 25, and October 25, 1933, K-67.

about Republican morale. On April 21, Congressman Bert Snell of New York, Senator Dave Reed of Pennsylvania, and Senator Frederick Walcott of Connecticut publicized a joint statement indicting the Inflation Bill then pending in Congress. Press speculation credited Ogden Mills with inspiring the action and Hoover with sanctioning it.²⁷ Whatever the case, the statement coincided with Hoover's private opinions that early New Deal legislation placed too much power in the executive office. Hoover also anticipated a new land boom resulting from the bill. Because all inflation bills tended to stifle long-term credit, he assumed the probability of additional inflation in the future. He also predicted, correctly, the early but temporary benefits for labor and agriculture.²⁸

During the summer of 1933, Henry Stimson visited England, conferred with British and American officials attending the London Economic Conference, and informed Hoover of the consternation over America's desertion of the gold

²⁷New York Times, April 22, 1933, 1. Reed, Pennsylvania's Republican leader, was a frequent delegate to National Conventions from 1924 to 1940, served in the Senate from 1922-1935, and headed the Mellon machine. Snell, a New York Republican, a convention delegate from 1916 to 1940, and a congressman from 1915-1939, was an arch-defender of Hoover's record in the House of Representatives during the 1930's. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1724, 1838.

²⁸Hoover to Brown, April 25, 1933, K-16. Hoover termed the Inflation Bill before Congress the most "dangerous proposal [ever] laid before Congress."

standard.²⁹ Both men agreed that the New Deal was drifting toward the "far right."³⁰

In the spring and early summer of 1933, as long-term credit evaporated, as the treasury situation remained critical, and as the recession continued,³¹ Mills and Hoover became more certain that the New Deal could not effect long-run recovery. Yet Hoover, in an optimistic moment, repeated his belief that "the fundamental forces of recovery established by [his] administration" might yet take effect. He ventured that more attention should be given to the question of the New Deal as "an Emergency program or a social program." He concluded that FDR lacked the intelligence to form a social program and must be grandstanding. Others would have to remove the cancers.³²

By autumn, Lewis Strauss, a lifetime friend and an

²⁹Stimson to Hoover, July 31, 1933, K-129.

³⁰Hoover to Stimson, October 3, 1933, and Stimson to Hoover, October 10, 1933, K-129. Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston, 1960), 379, credits Stimson with rejecting H.H.'s insinuations of a fascist state. Yet, it was Stimson who was most candid about FDR's move toward the "far right." Stimson to Hoover, October 10, 1933, K-129, is specific on this point. Only later did Stimson's views on the New Deal change.

³¹Mills to Hoover, June 13, 1933, K-92.

³²Hoover to Mills, June 23, 1933, K-92. William Allen White encouraged such a Hooverian conclusion by criticizing the lack of direction in Washington. White said there was "no plan either concealed or conscious. . . . It is obviously a case of trial and error." FDR was "the greatest hitchhiker, . . . courageous and unintelligent." White to Hoover, May 3, 1934, K-147.

associate from the relief work of World War I, revealed to Hoover that certain New Deal advisers were pressuring FDR to inflate the currency.³³ Hoover's onetime press secretary, George Akerson, discussed recent changes in Treasury personnel and the departure of Budget Director "Lew" Douglas as indications of the forthcoming inflation.³⁴ As expected, FDR gave ground to the inflationists.

To Hoover, one of the worst aspects of the New Deal was its agricultural policy. From the outset, he charged FDR with discovering a "white rabbit . . . in the Corn Belt."³⁵ Arthur Hyde, Hoover's Agricultural Secretary, pondered the question of whether the "monstrosity" (AAA) was "of the animal or the vegetable kingdom."³⁶ He marveled at Hoover's "kaleidoscope of national affairs" and expressed shock at the changes in the economic and social structure.³⁷ Hyde bemoaned the cost of the "ridiculous" agricultural experiments.³⁸ Franklin Fort, a New Jersey lawyer, onetime Congressman, and former GOP National Committee secretary,

³³Strauss to Hoover, September 20, 1933, K-130.

³⁴Akerson to Hoover, November 21, 1933, K-2.

³⁵Hoover to Hyde, March 25, 1933, K-61.

³⁶Hyde to Hoover, March 28, 1933, K-61.

³⁷Hyde to Hoover, April 19, 1933, K-61. In a letter of June 4, Hyde expressed horror at the "socialization of industry," the redistribution of income, the debasement of currency, and the repudiation of debts. Hyde to Hoover, June 4, 1933, K-61.

³⁸Hyde to Hoover, December 24, 1933, K-61.

warned his Chief that "the utter failure of the various radical farm proposals" insured inflation.³⁹ Such expressions only reassured Hoover that the New Deal was wrecking the nation and that something must be done to stop it.

Although Hoover devoted much of his time to an analysis of New Deal policies, he also concentrated on purely party politics. During the 1930's the Hoover clique accelerated the factionalism within the GOP. Aware of the movement underfoot to "oust Sanders" as party chairman, and cognizant of the political implications for their Chief's influence with the National Committee, Hooverites outmaneuvered the Old Guard leaders Charles Hilles of New York, Daniel Pomeroy of New Jersey, and Henry Roraback of Connecticut. Hoover thwarted the Old Guard putsch and retained control of the Republican organization by mobilizing his lieutenants.⁴⁰

Hoover called on former Postmaster General Walter F.

³⁹Fort to Hoover, November 8, 1933, K-38. Fort, a long-time Hoover colleague, served on the Food Administration staff during World War I. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1173.

⁴⁰"News and Comment From the National Capital," Literary Digest, CXVI (July 29, 1933), 10. Brown-Hoover correspondence, March-December, 1933, K-16. Of special significance is Brown to Larry Richey, April 14, 1933, K-16. Richey, Hoover's personal secretary and an alter ego of sorts, was H.H.'s most trusted assistant. Also see Richey to Brown, April 11, 1933, K-16. Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 226, sees Sanders as H.H.'s personal choice for the national chairmanship in 1932. Conservatives such as James Beck saw H.H.'s 1932 "rejection as an opportunity for true conservatives to regain command of their party." Keller, In Defense of Yesterday, 238.

Brown, the Ohio leader, for assistance.⁴¹ The Ohioan conferred with Mills and other Hoover cohorts in an effort to invigorate the dormant Republican machine.⁴² Brown reaffirmed the trustworthiness of Colonel R. G. Creager, the Texas boss and longtime Hoover ally.⁴³ For his part, Creager informed the party dissidents that only the Executive Committee of the party was empowered to remove Chairman Sanders.⁴⁴

As summer ripened, many Republicans, perturbed at Sanders' inactivity--even if from illness--and anxious for an aggressive attack on the New Deal, demanded action.⁴⁵ Colonel John Callan O'Laughlin, a rather conservative Hoover ally and an insider in the party hierarchy, delved into the intricate frictions at party headquarters, reconnoitered the strength of various factions, and informed Hoover that, in spite of fragmentation, the time was fast approaching when the majority would demand a change. Old Guard leaders were

⁴¹Brown to Richey, April 14, 1933, and Richey to Brown, April 11, 1933, K-16.

⁴²Brown to Hoover, May 2, 1933, K-16. Progressives like William Allen White urged reorganization along liberal lines. See White, "Liberalism for Republicans," Review of Reviews, LXXXVII (January, 1933), 27.

⁴³Brown to Hoover, May 16, 1933, K-16. As noted earlier, Creager organized H.H.'s forces in the South in 1928 and 1932.

⁴⁴Creager to Frederick S. Peck, May, 1933, K-16.

⁴⁵Edge to Hoover, May 6, 1933, K-33; John C. O'Laughlin to Hoover, May 17, 1933, and June 26, 1933, K-101.

pushing for an autumn showdown.⁴⁶ O 'Laughlin expressed the belief that Senator Edge should become the next chairman.⁴⁷

For his part, Chairman Sanders promised intensified action, a series of regional conferences, and a new cooperation by the Old Guard.⁴⁸ Hoover, recognizing the impermanency of the accord, decided that Administration Republicans must play the decisive role in offering an alternative chairman when Sanders did resign.⁴⁹ In an eastern trip, Creager of Texas sounded out conservative reaction and gained the acquiescence of New York boss Charlie Hilles. Although Creager suspected Hilles of personally desiring the office, the Old Guard leader probably was buying time to muster his own strength.⁵⁰ Whatever the case, Hoover, despite past relations, recognized Hilles' power and opened the door to a future settlement of their differences. Too, any hope of an alliance between the center and progressive

⁴⁶Ibid. O 'Laughlin noted that Charles D. Hilles, the New York leader, was instigating the demand for a new chairman.

⁴⁷O 'Laughlin to Hoover, May 17, 1933, K-101.

⁴⁸Brown to Hoover, October 10, 1933, K-16. Pomeroy, the New Jersey boss and Old Guard spokesman, gave a somewhat dubious endorsement of Sanders' efforts.

⁴⁹Hoover to Brown, May 17, 1933, K-16. H.H., noting "direct and indirect pressures" for Sanders' resignation, anticipated an early retirement but hoped that it would come at a more opportune time.

⁵⁰Brown to Hoover, May 23, 1933, K-16. Brown informed H.H. that there was no attractive alternative on the scene, that a semblance of party unity must be maintained, and that this was the wrong time for a change in the chairmanship.

wings of the party had evaporated.⁵¹

Following a regional meeting of the National Committee at Chicago, Brown assured Hoover of success. He promised a full report as soon as they could confer.⁵² Momentarily, the Hooverites postponed the chairmanship change.

Throughout the long summer of 1933, Hoover's band kept him informed of party developments. He received the major Eastern dailies at Palo Alto, and various correspondents enclosed editorials of interest from other papers. To a degree, Hoover's public silence was politically advantageous as it allowed the New Dealers plenty of rope.⁵³ Yet, it also worsened the void in GOP leadership. Gradually, Hoover's onetime conservative critics began to see him in a new light. Congressman James M. Beck, an ultra-conservative who long opposed Hoover's moderation, exchanged views with the "Sage of Palo Alto" regarding the termination of constitutional government.⁵⁴ Simeon D. Fess of Ohio, the GOP minority

⁵¹Hoover was aware of the attempt of western radicals to form a new "Progressive Party." Hoover to Brown, November 22, 1933, K-16.

⁵²Brown to Hoover, July 15, 1933, K-16.

⁵³Article, Literary Digest, CXVI (July 29, 1933), 10.

⁵⁴Beck to Hoover, June 13, and June 28, 1933, Hoover to Beck, June 19, 1933, K-9. A month earlier Beck denounced the New Dealer's adoption of the "gag rule" as "the most monstrous denial of representative government ever proposed to an American Congress." Cong. Rec., 73 Cong., 1 Sess. (May 4, 1933), 4196.

leader in the House of Representatives,⁵⁵ told Hoover that the New Deal was leading to "State Socialism and regimentation." It was, wrote Fess, "not a drift to the left wing; [but] a complete somersault."⁵⁶ Fess incorporated Hooverian analyses in his Senate speeches but allowed his inspiration to remain anonymous.⁵⁷ The two men agreed to stand on their principles. They shared indignation at the compromising tendencies of disloyal Republicans.⁵⁸

As his mail reflected a growing dissatisfaction with the New Deal, Hoover became less cautious and disseminated his darkest thoughts among lawyers, bankers, oldline Republicans, and even newspapermen--once critical of him. Ironically, he gained popularity in circles previously hostile. Symbolically, the dispersion of his ideas compared to the permeation of money under his RFC--a trickle down theory: much of his constructive criticism reached only the elite instead of spreading out to the public, whereas his shrill, somewhat ludicrous charges gained currency and invited the criticism of a later generation.

⁵⁵Fess was an educator, news editor, congressman, then Senator from Ohio. Biographical Directory, 1153.

⁵⁶Fess to Hoover, June 27, and June 29, 1933, K-36. Fess also spoke of "bolshevik poison."

⁵⁷Fess to Hoover, May 4, 1933, K-36. For Fess' defense of the American System, American Individualism, and his attack on regimentation, see Cong. Rec., 73 Cong., 1 Sess (June 7, 1933), 5273.

⁵⁸Hoover to Fess, May 9, 1933, K-36.

Samuel Crowther, a witty writer and news correspondent, became a Hoover favorite because of his denunciation of "The Happiness Boys" and that "circus" in Washington.⁵⁹ With invective, Crowther lambasted the leaderless, inefficient, disingenuous New Deal, run by a "bunch of children playing with matches."⁶⁰ Crowther, recognizing the ancient and mutual hatred between Hoover and Senators Hiram Johnson and William E. Borah, wrote to him that once the two Senators became disillusioned by the New Deal, they would turn on FDR with "all the fury of frustrated prostitutes."⁶¹ Crowther, meanwhile, cautioned the former President against New Deal tricks and urged constant vigilance.⁶²

The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, once accepted even by industrialists, endorsed by Hoover's former Secretary of War Patrick Hurley, and allegedly an extension of Hoover's "voluntary" business codes, became anathema to Hoover.⁶³ He had championed voluntary codes for industry, but his emphasis had differed considerably from that of the

⁵⁹Crowther to Hoover, March 5, 1933, K-25.

⁶⁰Crowther to Hoover, April 22, 1933, and April 28, 1933, K-25. H.H. replied that Crowther's writing had "punch." Hoover to Crowther, June 8, 1933, K-25.

⁶¹Crowther to Hoover, June 13, 1933, K-25.

⁶²Crowther to Hoover, June 19, 1933, K-25. To Crowther, FDR was making the same mistakes as the European dictators.

⁶³Hurley to Hoover, December 27, 1933, K-60; "At the Observation Post," Literary Digest, CXVII (June 23, 1934), 12.

NRA.⁶⁴ In a bipartisan moment, Hoover signed the consumer's pledge for the NRA⁶⁵ before Mills explained that the NRA would eventually drive up costs and prices while adversely affecting consumption.⁶⁶ Neither businessmen nor reformers anticipated the resultant monopoly or the coercion involved in federal supervision of wages, hours, and standards.⁶⁷

In a dark mood, Hyde wrote to Hoover of the impending doom that would result from the NRA's habit of setting "neighbors to spying upon one another" and from its aggravation of labor-management discord.⁶⁸ At last, Hoover's pique at business regimentation reached an apex.⁶⁹ In a revealing

⁶⁴Ibid.; Fess to Hoover, November 6, 1933, K-36, agreed on the need to impress upon the public the "temporary" nature of the NRA. Charles F. Roos, NRA, Economic Planning (Bloomington, 1937), 7, 27, treats H.H.'s contribution to the NRA idea, and notes his advocacy of higher wages and shorter hours. Hereinafter cited as Roos, NRA.

⁶⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston, 1958), 115. Hereinafter cited as Schlesinger, New Deal.

⁶⁶Mills to Hoover, July 20, 1933, K-92.

⁶⁷Otis L. Graham, Jr., An Encore For Reform (New York, 1967), 29. Interestingly, the old progressive reformers used the same arguments as Hooverites in rejecting the NRA.

⁶⁸Hyde to Hoover, August 10, 1933, K-61.

⁶⁹Fort to Hoover, April 1, and April 12, 1933, K-38. Fort promised to keep H.H. posted on "the tempo of things." He was convinced the New Deal was leading the nation toward economic quicksand and that business opposition to all New Deal policies would soon crystallize. Also see Fort to Hoover, May 12, and June 9, 1933, and Hoover to Fort, June 14, 1933, K-38. Hoover was well informed of NRA activities, impact, and results. See Hoover Papers, Box Q-216 and Box Q-227 for NRA memos, articles, codes, court cases, and other data.

letter to Franklin Fort, a New Jersey banker, insurance man, and GOP stalwart, Hoover stated:

I am not in a position to criticize the code notion because I have for years advocated building up of business codes and have, in fact, taken part in the construction of scores of them; but, of course, I have no patience with the attempts to control production and prices . . . it is all a question of degree.⁷⁰

Hoover soon came to believe that the NRA encouraged monopoly by its circumvention of the antitrust law, and that it negated his American Individualism through a dictatorial fixing of hours and wages, as well as by its regulation of products, quantities, prices, and distribution. Business, he said, was "hooked on an artificial fly."⁷¹ Nor could he accept Hurley's optimistic belief that the NRA legislation would be amended shortly.⁷² Convinced of the NRA's failure, Hoover saw it as an impediment to recovery.⁷³ Charles F. Roos, NRA Director of Research, concluded that the NRA "must, as a whole, be regarded as a sincere but ineffective effort to alleviate the depression."⁷⁴

As criticism of the NRA mushroomed, Negro journalist

⁷⁰Hoover to Fort, September 3, 1933, K-38.

⁷¹Hoover, Memoirs, III, 421-427; Hoover to Mills, July 26, 1933, K-92. See Roos, NRA, 45-51.

⁷²Hurley to Hoover, December 27, 1933, and Hoover to Hurley, January 4, 1934, K-60.

⁷³Hoover to Hurley, January 4, 1934, K-60. H.H. wryly concluded that New Dealers would credit him with fathering the NRA as soon as they accepted its failure.

⁷⁴Roos, NRA, 472.

John P. Davis exposed the discrimination involved in the program. According to Davis, NRA white workers displaced Negro industrial workers even while accelerated prices out-gained the new wages. Nor were Negroes' wages as high as those of whites, even under NRA codes. Finally, as marginal workers, Negroes were the first to lose their jobs.⁷⁵ The future utility of NRA seemed dubious.

In September, 1933, Ogden Mills analyzed America's economy for his Chief. Despite encouraging signs of recovery, Mills pointed to the lack of capital market, the stagnation of the goods industries, the accelerating plight of the farmer, and credit shortage. He predicted inflation but assured Hoover that their silence must be maintained for the time, as they would "only be accused of sabotaging the recovery program by destroying confidence."⁷⁶ Hoover readily incorporated Mills' analysis into his own thinking and shared it with other associates.⁷⁷ By October, news analyst Lawrence Sullivan was publicizing the negative effect of the

⁷⁵John P. Davis, "What Price National Recovery?" Crisis, XL (December, 1933), 271-272. Roos, NRA, 172-173, notes the early opposition to NRA by dissatisfied Negroes. He discusses the preference given whites in the South for new jobs, the discrimination in wages, and the actual replacement of Negroes in other jobs. He estimates that 500,000 Negro workers were effected by the discriminatory codes.

⁷⁶Mills to Hoover, September 19, 1933, K-92. During Mills' absence Henry M. Robinson, a Los Angeles banker, had furnished H.H. with Federal Reserve figures and information. Robinson to Hoover, March 28, April 8, June 24, and August 7, 1933, K-92.

⁷⁷Hoover to Brown, November 16, 1933, K-92.

NRA and the current paralysis in business.⁷⁸ Hoover, anxious for an acceleration of anti-New Deal articles, pressed Mills to influence the employment of William Hard as an editor for the New York Herald Tribune: "[Hard] badly needs a pulpit where his unique qualities of humor and satire, his economic penetration, can have full play."⁷⁹

Although Hoover held a moderate view of the New Deal throughout much of the summer of 1933, even crediting FDR with majority support, the rejected recluse steadily moved to the right.⁸⁰ By autumn, he accepted the hard line and asserted that "behind [New Deal] measures is a determination to conduct some sort of social revolution."⁸¹ As Hoover moved toward a reconciliation with Eastern conservatives, including even some Old Guard leaders, he recognized the demise of the old GOP. After all, Hiram Johnson and his colleagues were trying to organize a new "Progressive Party."⁸² Too, the nation was moving leftward, destroying any possibility of Hoover's reunification of the center support he had once commanded. Hoover, the centrist, must

⁷⁸"New Deal in Command," Forbes Magazine, October 15, 1933, copy in General Charles Dawes' letter to Hoover, October 31, 1933, K-27.

⁷⁹Hoover to Mills, November 15, 1933, K-92.

⁸⁰Hoover to Fess, July 5, 1933, K-36.

⁸¹Hoover to Fess, November 14, 1933, K-36, showed little restraint as he discussed the "socialism [which] seemed to be the aim."

⁸²Hoover to Brown, November 22, 1933, K-16.

alter his philosophy or seek new allies to the right. Inevitably, he remained loyal to his ideas. In seclusion, he drafted a list of principles for the party and anxiously urged National Committee members to adopt his fundamental ideas.⁸³ Mills and Brown conferred with National Chairman Ev Sanders, Senator Dave Reed, and Congressman Bert Snell in an effort to force a statement of principles by the National Committee.⁸⁴ As the hopes for a statement of principles lagged, Hoover wrote Brown that they must assert the importance of ideas and defend the Constitution. He found a continuance of the current "socialistic program," with its disastrous fiscal program, intolerable. He expressed agitation at Sanders' remark concerning too much "Hoover color to the National Committee."⁸⁵ Finally, in confidence, he stated that he had been approached by a potential chairman who would cooperate and "be a friend of all of us."⁸⁶

Hooverian allies such as Simeon Fess informed him that the timing was wrong for a statement of principles and that "the greatest obstacle lies within our own ranks, . . .

⁸³Hoover to Brown, October 22, October 23, and December 5, 1933, K-16. H.H. wanted to remain anonymous because he recognized that certain Congressional leaders would automatically oppose anything he supported.

⁸⁴Brown to Hoover, October 10, 1933, K-16. Brown also told H.H. that Eastern leaders must be wooed concerning the subject of a new treasurer for the National Committee.

⁸⁵Hoover to Brown, October 22, 1933, K-16.

⁸⁶Ibid.

where unity on fundamental principles is impossible."⁸⁷ Hoover, in frustration, postponed the expression of his deepest desire.

He continually tried to goad Ev Sanders and the National Committee into action. Failing this, he encouraged the "gradual erection of committees and organizations to oppose [New Deal] policies."⁸⁸ Finally, Hoover realized that Sanders, a lame horse, must be sacrificed.⁸⁹ Hoover urged Franklin Fort, his reliable Jersey associate, "to establish friendly relations with Senator Edge," who "could be made to serve most useful purposes if he had the opportunity as he would appeal to certain groups most strongly."⁹⁰

In pursuance of an alliance with Edge, Hoover learned that the Jersey Republican would accept the Chairmanship providing a fight could be avoided. Edge revealed that Senator Dave Reed and George Moses were collecting votes for him.⁹¹ Hoover remained friendly to Edge's efforts, hoping

⁸⁷Fess to Hoover, November 6, November 28, December 12, December 22, 1933, and Hoover to Fess, October 24, 1933, K-36.

⁸⁸Hoover to Sanders, July 5, December 11, 1933, and January 10, 1934, K-117; Hoover to Brown, November 22, 1933, K-16; and Hoover to Reed, October 23, 1933, K-107.

⁸⁹Hoover to Brown, December 5, 1933, and Brown to Hoover, December 15, 1933, K-16.

⁹⁰Hoover to Fort, November 14, 1933, K-38. Edge was a former New Jersey Governor, two-time U. S. Senator, Hoover's ambassador to France, and a perennial delegate to GOP conventions from 1916-1948. Biographical Directory, 1118.

⁹¹Edge to Hoover, October 30, 1933, K-33.

to undercut the influence of the uncooperative and reactionary Jersey boss, Daniel Pomeroy.⁹² Although Sanders balked on Hoover's idea of a "statement of principles" and refused to include Hoover's defeated congressional supporters in the party hierarchy, it was the wrong time for a change in the chairmanship. Consequently, Mills, probably at Hoover's direction, and with the aid of Frank Knox and Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, persuaded the Eastern leaders to refrain from injecting the chairmanship fight into the December meeting. Although the Hooverites again carried the day, all sides admitted that a change was certain in 1934.⁹³

Following the Hoover triumph, Edge, Senator Reed, and Senator Charles McNary of Oregon conferred in Washington. McNary, a long-time Hoover antagonist, emerged from the parley and told reporters that Hoover had withdrawn from politics permanently, that Ev Sanders was being permitted to continue as the GOP Chairman, and that the party was badly divided.⁹⁴ Hoover, understandably, was incensed at McNary's politics and the effort "to read me out of any form of

⁹²Hoover to Brown, December 5, 1933, and Brown to Hoover, December 15, 1933, K-15. Although Hoover urged Edge to try for the National Committee, he made no commitment concerning the chairmanship. By mid-December, Pomeroy recovered and thwarted the move to elevate Edge.

⁹³Hoover to Sanders, December 11, 1933, and January 10, 1934, K-117. Brown to Hoover, December 15, 1933, K-16.

⁹⁴Brown to Hoover, December 27, 1933, K-16, related the version current in New York newspapers.

public life."⁹⁵

Aside from the intra-party struggles, Hoover was becoming more and more impatient with New Deal policies. He was anxious for an acceleration of constructive criticism and was considering writing a book on the New Deal.⁹⁶ As old Progressives such as Bainbridge Colby and Henry J. Allen concluded that FDR had "sabotaged" the Constitution, Hoover determined to expose the New Dealers.⁹⁷

Whereas the Hoover Administration had initiated an investigation of the dishonest political machine of Louisiana Senator Huey Long for its income tax evasions, Roosevelt ignored the odor for two years.⁹⁸ Too, Hoover was upset by a memorandum from the U. S. Department of Agriculture (dated January 5, 1934, and concerning AAA personnel), stating that "all additional appointments, including replacements, may be made without regard to the Civil Service rules and

⁹⁵Hoover to Brown, December 29, 1933, K-16. H.H. suspected McNary of "political ambitions," meaning the GOP presidential nomination of 1936.

⁹⁶Hoover to Crowther, September 4, and November 13, 1933, K-25.

⁹⁷Akerson to Hoover, September 6, 1933, K-2, informed H.H. of a conference with Colby. Allen, the Kansas Senator, expressed shock at FDR's continuous "trampling on the constitution." Allen to Hoover, November 14, 1933, K-2.

⁹⁸T. Harry Williams, Huey Long (New York, 1969), 794-801, notes that FDR renewed the exposure of Long only after the "Kingfish" became a thorn in Roosevelt's side. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 310, shows Progressive disillusionment with FDR's general attitude toward political machines.

regulations."⁹⁹ Now Hoover was certain that New Dealers were "not interested in reform." In fact, they were cutting out "the heart and nerve center" of the American system. They were playing politics.¹⁰⁰ New Dealers were violating moral and political traditions of the past. They had abandoned the communion table of the American System.

As "evidence" of political, economic, and intellectual dishonesty accumulated, Hoover urged Will Irwin, his life-time friend, biographer, and confidant, to write a book on "modern methods of propaganda," revealing how the New Deal stifled free speech and free criticism. He even outlined the sections for a book. Significantly, he wanted the last part to concentrate on the NRA and New Deal propaganda with their "distortion" and "destruction" of true liberalism. He thought the New Deal was drifting "more clearly to Fascism and Nazism than even toward Socialism."¹⁰¹ Enunciating his darkest fears, Hoover indicted the New Deal as too far to the right.¹⁰²

⁹⁹Memorandum, U. S. Department of Agriculture, January 5, 1934, Clause F, Q-213.

¹⁰⁰Hoover to Fess, December 18, 1933, and December 27, 1933, K-36. H.H. blasted the New Deal for prolonging the depression, abetting the bank panic, and devaluing the dollar. He charged FDR with Fascist, Hitlerian tactics.

¹⁰¹Hoover to Irwin, December 16, 1933, K-62.

¹⁰²For months Crowther had accused H.H. of too much restraint. H.H. dissented by saying, "I would not go as far as you do." Crowther to Hoover, November 24, 1933, and Hoover to Crowther, December 1, 1933, K-25.

To add to Hoover's pessimism, Mills wrote that the new budget figures were "literally, staggering." He also noted the alarming proportions of the Civil Works Administration dole, the failure to balance the budget, and the high probability that inflation in the new year would approach fifty per cent.¹⁰³

Nor could Hoover expect the GOP in Congress to offer sane alternatives. Cal O 'Laughlin, in a confidential analysis, informed the Chief of the fragmentation within the GOP in Congress, the lack of leadership, the absence of a policy, and the certainty that Senator McNary, working for an alliance with Progressives, would hold no caucuses and present no programs because he thought the Democrats should be given plenty of rope and thus determine the issues.¹⁰⁴ Samuel Crowther blasted the "craven stupidity of the GOP in Congress" and warned Hoover to expect nothing from the "nit-wits" holding positions of leadership.¹⁰⁵

Hoover decided that the future of the party and the nation depended on attracting young men of vision to the

¹⁰³Mills to Hoover, January 5, 1934, K-92.

¹⁰⁴O 'Laughlin to Hoover, December 30, 1933, K-101. Ashmun Brown described McNary as "unenlightened." A. Brown to Hoover, January 11, 1934, K-15.

¹⁰⁵Crowther to Hoover, January 25, and January 30, 1934, K-25.

cause.¹⁰⁶ He asked Henry Allen of Kansas and Arthur Hyde of Missouri to organize a Young Republican Club in their area. In suggesting they follow the example of the "Republican Builders" in New York, he accepted the necessity of educating the public and winning it to "high ideals."¹⁰⁷

By the winter of 1933-1934, senatorial politicians, probably hoping to embarrass the Hoover Administration, initiated the Black Investigation, an inquiry into the contracts and activities of former Postmaster General Walter F. Brown. Hoover, acting through Larry Richey and Edgar Rickard, two trusted aides, urged Brown to volunteer as a witness.¹⁰⁸ Hoover and Brown, irritated at the smear efforts of the Black investigation, agreed that Capitol Hill was dominated by "popinjays and nitwits."¹⁰⁹ Although the inquiry had scrutinized Brown's activities with reference to

¹⁰⁶As early as August, 1933, Hoover had urged the development of more young Republican clubs. Hoover Collection, LXIII, Item 2145, Hoover to Louis M. Killen, August 26, 1933.

¹⁰⁷Hoover to Allen, January 27, February 1, and February 16, 1934, K-2; Hoover to Hyde, January 27, January 29, March 5, 1934, and Hyde to Hoover, March 13, 1934, K-61. H.H. pointed to the success of Mills in New York and the attractive name of the "Republican Builders." On this subject H.H. also wrote to Jay Darling of Iowa. For the affirmative reply, see Darling to Hoover, October 25, 1933, K-26.

¹⁰⁸Edgar Rickard to Hoover, September 30, 1933, K-16. Rickard, a "close friend and devoted associate" from the relief activities onward, was trusted with the most confidential matters. Davis, "Hoover: Another Appraisal," 297.

¹⁰⁹Brown to Hoover, January 31, March 3, March 10, March 12, and May 9, 1934, and Hoover to Brown, March 5, March 7, March 13, May 3, and May 14, 1934, K-16.

mail contracts, stock holdings, dividends, and other matters, nothing was uncovered.¹¹⁰ When Brown failed to follow his suggestion of a libel suit, Hoover, anxious for vindication, suggested that Brown at least write a series of articles on how the Hoover Administration had advanced the aviation industry.¹¹¹ Following the fruitless investigation of Brown, Congress turned on Patrick Hurley, the former Secretary of War, and a firm Hoover supporter.¹¹² Again, a Hoover official was cleared but the ex-President's anger bristled at the insinuations.¹¹³

In spite of the temptation to defend his policies and principles, Hoover maintained his public silence. When Alan Fox, a prominent New York Republican, approached him and asked him to make the Lincoln Day Dinner Address, even the assurance that it might well be used by others to launch their presidential aspirations would not move Hoover to accept.¹¹⁴ Recognizing the political implication, he did

¹¹⁰Stone to Hoover, March 27, 1934, K-130, stated that FDR had made "a serious mistake in [his] handling of the air mail contracts." Akerson to Hoover, February 26, 1934, K-1.

¹¹¹Hoover to Brown, May 3, 1934, K-16.

¹¹²Hurley, recognizing H.H.'s frustration and bitterness over the politically motivated investigations, tried to quell his anger. Hurley to Hoover, June 8, 1934, K-60.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Fox to Hoover, January 16, 1934, K-39, wanted H.H.'s advice regarding the future before "featuring any such potential candidate" for the 1936 nomination. Fox also informed his "Chief" that Mills was too antagonistic a personality to have any political future.

suggest that Fox choose a Midwesterner such as Arthur Hyde as speaker.¹¹⁵ Too, he promised to help secure Hyde's consent.¹¹⁶ As anticipated, the Missourian accepted.¹¹⁷

Pleased with Hyde's selection and acceptance, Hoover urged him to defend their high spiritual and intellectual principles. He offered to aid Hyde in writing the speech and pressed for a condemnation of New Deal regimentation, fiscal policies, and the negation of the "spirit" of the Bill of Rights.¹¹⁸ Hoover, in advance, assured a wide circulation of the February 12 Address.¹¹⁹

James Beck, following Hoover's earlier advice, also struck a discordant note in launching an aggressive attack on the New Deal. In Hooverian style, Beck solemnly espoused "The Mission of the Republican Party."¹²⁰ Pennsylvania's Henry Fletcher, the future GOP National Chairman, urged a more earnest opposition if the party was to survive.¹²¹

¹¹⁵Hoover to Fox, telegram, January 16, 1934, and Hoover to Fox, January 19, 1934, K-39.

¹¹⁶Hoover to Hyde, January 22, 1934, K-39.

¹¹⁷Fox to Hoover, January 30, 1934, K-39.

¹¹⁸Hoover to Hyde, January 27, January 29, March 5, and January 30, 1934, K-61.

¹¹⁹New York Times, February 13, 1934; Hyde to Hoover, February 23, 1934, K-61.

¹²⁰New York Times, February 13, 1934; Beck to Hoover, January 12, 1934, and February 10, 1934, and Hoover to Beck, February 20, 1934, K-9. Beck joined Hyde as a speaker at the Lincoln Day Dinner.

¹²¹Fletcher to Hoover, February 22, 1934, K-38.

Privately, Hoover expressed his belief that the nation was "recovering some of its critical faculties."¹²²

By February, 1934, Hoover was obsessed with the money bill, and the enormous profits speculators were making. In a series of letters to Crowther, Hoover unburdened his disgust with a policy that encouraged investors, already overextended in stocks, to profit from gold manipulation. He also doubted the administration's intention of allowing an investigation.¹²³

As criticism of the New Deal surfaced, the demand for a change in the GOP chairmanship accelerated. O 'Laughlin informed Hoover of Senator Vandenberg's backstage maneuvers and the widespread rumor that Sanders was finished. He urged his Chief to make a choice and "take steps promptly to see that the proper man is selected."¹²⁴ O 'Laughlin repeated that Edge was the front-runner. Personally, he had sounded out Hilles on the possibility of Henry Fletcher, but the New Yorker remained noncommittal. Hilles, however, was receptive to a conference with Hoover. Elsewhere, McNary

¹²²Hoover to Moses, April 27, 1934, K-9.

¹²³Crowther to Hoover, January 31, and February 21, 1934, and Hoover to Crowther, February 3, 1934, and February 6, and February 26, 1934, K-25.

¹²⁴O 'Laughlin to Hoover, January 20, and January 26, 1934, Box 44, John Callan O 'Laughlin Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Permission to use the O 'Laughlin Papers was granted by Mrs. Dorothy Brown, Washington, D. C.

avored Senator Dickinson, and Vandenberg was backing Hanford MacNider.¹²⁵

Although O 'Laughlin and Harrison Spangler, Hoover's Iowa leader, pressed him for a decision concerning the chairmanship, Hoover was certain only of the need for a "new face," preferably from the Midwest. When Spangler and other Hooverites failed to draft a list of possibilities, Hoover reiterated his willingness to accept Edge.¹²⁶ Hilles, with the Eastern bloc in his pocket, thwarted the move for Edge.¹²⁷ Too, the Jerseyman hardly fulfilled Hoover's conditions for a "new face," young blood, and a Midwestern origin.¹²⁸ Seeing that Congressional leaders would soon

¹²⁵O 'Laughlin to Hoover, January 26, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, Library of Congress. As early as July, Vandenberg had worked for the selection of MacNider, the Commander of the American Legion, former Assistant Secretary of War, and a prominent financier. Charles B. Robbins to MacNider, July 1, 1933, and MacNider to Vandenberg, July 3, 1933, and MacNider to Charles B. Robbins, July 3, 1933, and MacNider to Congressman Paul A. Martin, July 13, 1933, Series 5, Box 73, 1933 folder, Hanford MacNider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. MacNider wanted no part of the factional quarrel between the Hoover-Mills clique and the Wadsworth-Hilles gang. He thought that Governor Brucker of Michigan was a potential national chairman.

¹²⁶Spangler to Hoover, November 29, 1933, Hoover to Spangler, December 28, 1933, K-127; Hoover to O 'Laughlin, January 29, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

¹²⁷O 'Laughlin to Hoover, February 10, February 27, and March 17, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. By March, Hilles was leaning toward Fletcher. Conrad Joyner sees Fletcher as the favorite of the Old Guard, an "arch-conservative," and as out of tune with GOP Congressional leadership. Conrad Joyner, The Republican Dilemma (Tuscon, 1963), 4.

¹²⁸Hoover to O 'Laughlin, March 5, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

force Sanders' resignation, Hoover asked Brown to discuss a list of potential successors with the Chairman. Possible choices included Hilles, Edge, Senator Dickinson, Fletcher, and MacNider.¹²⁹

Although Brown hastily sounded out Hooverites Mills and California oil executive Mark Regua, each supported a different candidate.¹³⁰ The lack of consensus only compounded Hoover's difficulty in endorsing one of the candidates. Although he realized that anyone with as much "Hoover color" as Spangler was unavailable, Hoover probably preferred Senator Edge but asked Mills to confer with Henry Fletcher. Following a March conference with Mills, Fletcher publicly declined to run for the Pennsylvania Governorship and wrote Hoover that the fight for the chairmanship was "in a fog."¹³¹ In writing Mills, Hoover expressed disappointment over the lack of cohesion among Hooverites on any topic, the shortage of campaign funds, and party apathy.¹³²

Franklin Fort, Hoover's Jerseyite leader, agreed to go to Chicago for the June meeting of the National Committee,

¹²⁹Hoover to Brown, February 7, 1934, K-16.

¹³⁰Brown to Hoover, May 9, 1934, K-16. Mills favored Governor Garder of Maine, Regua leaned toward Silas Strawn, the Chicago banker, and Brown urged the selection of Harrison Spangler of Iowa. Mills to Hoover, April 20, 1934, K-92, disclosed the impasse following a Hilles, Brown, Regua, Mills and Roraback conference in New York.

¹³¹Fletcher to Hoover, March 23, 1934, K-38.

¹³²Hoover to Mills, April 10, and April 24, 1934, K-92.

if Hooverites endorsed a candidate for chairman.¹³³ Revealingly, Hoover admitted that "Our trouble is that we do not know the ideal man for Chairman." However, he reassured Fort that "if the Republicans attempt to follow the Old Guard I shall make a public protest."¹³⁴

Hoover urged Creager, Spangler, and Brown to push for a statement of principles as well as "a new face" for chairman. He noted the availability of ex-Governor Brucker of Michigan but endorsed no one.¹³⁵ At the close of the month, Sanders, as expected, called for a June meeting of the National Committee.¹³⁶

On June 6, the National Committee elected Henry Fletcher chairman. Hoover praised the new officer as "a most experienced and courageous leader" and urged him to create a vigorous party organization, issue a declaration of principles, and invite the youth of the party into national councils.¹³⁷

¹³³Fort to Hoover, May, 1934, K-38, informed the Chief of a meeting with Regua and Walter Newton. Fort urged H.H. to remain independent of the Old Guard.

¹³⁴Hoover to Fort, May 17, 1934, K-38.

¹³⁵Creager to Hoover, May 17, 1934, and Hoover to Creager, May 23, 1934, K-25; Hoover to Spangler, May 9, May 17, and May 23, 1934, and Spangler to Hoover, May 5, May 12, and May 15, 1934, K-127; Hoover to Brown, May 14, 1934, K-16. Hereafter Brown's long illness disrupted the intense correspondence for months. Hoover to Sanders, May 30, 1934, K-117, expressed regret at Ev's retirement and applauded his devotion to the party. Hoover to O 'Laughlin, May 17, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

¹³⁶Spangler to Hoover, May 5, 1934, K-127.

¹³⁷Hoover to Fletcher, telegram, June 6, 1934, K-42; New York Times, June 7, 1934, 1.

Men representing the diverse factions of the GOP applauded Fletcher's election as Chairman.¹³⁸ Hooverites commended Fletcher's proposals to revive the party. Mills assured the Chief that a forthcoming Committee on Policies would make positive proposals in the fields of industry, agriculture, finance, and foreign relations.¹³⁹ O 'Laughlin wired Hoover that Fletcher's cooperation was assured and that Spangler and John D. M. Hamilton would help clean house.¹⁴⁰ With the elimination of the chairmanship question, and the satisfactory move to formulate a program in opposition to the New Deal, Hoover again concentrated on specific policies.

Although Hoover's own Federal Farm Board, in its financing of farm cooperatives and attempted systematization

¹³⁸James R. Garfield to Hoover, July 9, 1934, K-42; Fort to Hoover, June 15, 1934, K-38; Mills to Hoover, June 25, 1934, K-92; Knox to Hoover, July 11, 1934, K-72. Knox said, "I like very much the way Henry Fletcher is taking hold of his job." Frank Kent, Without Gloves (New York, 1934), 277-279, notes that Fletcher, a 1912 Bull Mooser, was acceptable to men as different as Senator Dave Reed and William Allen White.

¹³⁹Mills to Hoover, June 25, 1934, K-92.

¹⁴⁰O 'Laughlin to Hoover, June 25, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. Schlesinger, New Deal, 481, credits Hilles and the Old Guard with outmaneuvering the Hooverites in the selection of Fletcher and the recognition of Hilles' leadership on the policy committee. However, the evidence, previously treated, shows that the Hooverites, like the Old Guard, lacked a majority and, at best, could only exercise a veto on the chairmanship question. As Brown, Mills, O 'Laughlin, and other Hooverites stated, Fletcher was quite acceptable. His inclusion of Spangler and Hamilton as his chief assistants indicated the congenial relationship between H.H. and the new chairman. Fletcher was not H.H.'s first choice, but it is equally doubtful that he was at the top of the Hilles list either.

of marketing farm products, had served as the basis for New Deal agricultural policies, Hoover failed to admit the connection.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, Hoover's perceptive lieutenant Ogden Mills admitted that agriculture was the one area in which New Dealers had continued and expanded a Hoover program.¹⁴² Agricultural leader George N. Peek lambasted FDR's Agricultural Secretary Henry A. Wallace for implementing and enforcing a Hoover policy.¹⁴³

As summer advanced, as the New Deal moved to newer and more extreme positions, as his anxiety mounted, as "evidence" of corruption, bureaucratic escalation, inefficiency, and even negative effects surfaced, Hoover's bitterness fermented. The "preposterous" AAA, which Hoover had lamented earlier, continued in his view to violate one constitutional principle after another.¹⁴⁴ He was incensed at the provocative contract clause that farmers were being forced to sign

¹⁴¹"At the Observation Post," Literary Digest, CXVII (June 23, 1934), 12. Gilbert C. Fite, "Farmer Opinion and the Agricultural Adjustment Act, 1933," MVHR, XLVIII (March, 1962), 657-658.

¹⁴²Mills, Seventeen Million, 11. Mills tried to distinguish the two administrations by degree: "between government leadership and government coercion." Too, he noted that H.H.'s innovations were temporary, whereas FDR's were permanent.

¹⁴³George N. Peek, Why Quit Our Own (New York, 1936), 62. In the past, Peek had opposed H.H. for "restricting production to the demand of the domestic market."

¹⁴⁴Hoover to Mills, July 26, 1933, K-92.

in order to retain their corn loans.¹⁴⁵ Senator Dickinson and New Hampshire's George Moses questioned the Americanism of such policies.¹⁴⁶ Even William Allen White, normally a cautious commentator, denounced "the apple-cheeked, starry-eyed brain trusters in the Agricultural Department" and the federal government's excessive use of power.¹⁴⁷ Chicago newspaper magnate and former Bull Mooser Frank Knox, in bewilderment, marveled at the "asininity of Roosevelt and Wallace persisting in the AAA folly when Providence has taken the necessity for it out of their hands."¹⁴⁸ As food prices advanced upward, FDR criticized the press for publicizing the figures and thus creating fear in the public

¹⁴⁵L. W. Ainsworth, Iowa National Committeeman, a close friend of Senator Dickinson and an agricultural adviser, kept H.H. informed on agricultural policy, including this contract clause. The clause that offended H.H. read: "the undersigned agrees . . . in any general plan or program presented by the Secretary of Agriculture for the reduction in acreage of corn and production of hogs for market in 1934." Copy of contract found in Ainsworth to Hoover, December 10, 1933, and January 5, 1934, K-2.

¹⁴⁶Moses to Hoover, April 12, and April 18, 1933, K-92, had accused the Brain Trust of "undiluted sovietism." Dickinson to Hoover, September 14, 1933, and January 3, and February 23, 1934, K-29, secured a list of personnel turnovers within the AAA as well as the NRA and noted the defections because of conscience.

¹⁴⁷White to Hoover, May 3, 1934, K-147. As White joined the chorus indicting the processing tax, the Hoover council became virtually unanimous in its opinion of New Deal farm policy.

¹⁴⁸Knox to Hoover, August 27, 1934, K-72.

mind.¹⁴⁹ But to Hoover, as well as to correspondent Ashmun Brown, "The food destruction of the past eighteen months[,] silhouetted against the drought," was an explosive topic.¹⁵⁰

To many "concerned citizens," New Deal methods were intolerable. Reports of corruption were mounting steadily. CWA jobs reportedly were being allocated by the political bosses.¹⁵¹ Nepotism, meanwhile, reaped considerable profits in the sale of insurance policies to government port authorities.¹⁵²

The party situation, despite much optimism, improved only slightly. Hyde, recognizing the vacuum in leadership,

¹⁴⁹Ashmun Brown, the capital correspondent of the Providence Journal, wrote H.H. frequently. Brown explained the method by which FDR was juggling "the item of seigniorage in the Daily Treasury Statement" and thus minimizing the expanding deficits. A. Brown to Hoover, August 16, 1934, K-15.

¹⁵⁰Hoover to A. Brown, August 23, 1934, K-15. H.H. noted the growing criticism of AAA by consumers and farmers. Incensed at the Treasury deceptions, H.H. noted that the biggest camouflage concerned "General Expenditures" being transferred to "Emergency Expenditures." This included public works, naval construction, and other items. H.H. would continually point out this deception in his public speeches in 1935. As Brown noted, FDR also listed all "loans as assets." "Even a child," said Brown, would know better. Brown to Hoover, August 30, 1934, K-15.

¹⁵¹A. Brown to Hoover, January 11, 1934, K-15, cited three specific New England towns where New Deal patronage through government jobs was dependent on political subservience.

¹⁵²Walter Brown noted young James Roosevelt's sales of insurance policies to New York Port Authorities and to certain ports in the South. The contracts were unusually high, and the million-dollar negotiations netted considerable profits for the salesman. Brown to Richey, June 1, 1933, K-16.

urged the Chief to return to the arena: "You possess the only voice that will be heard. . . . You alone can adequately answer Roosevelt."¹⁵³ Charles G. Dawes, the former Vice-President, voiced the same opinion.¹⁵⁴ Crowther, tired of the "jelly-fish" politicians in Washington, pleaded with Hoover to launch a vigorous offensive.¹⁵⁵

Hoover, steeped in literature, correspondence, and propaganda of the conservative, oppositionist frame, assured a partisan analysis. New Deal proposals and actions challenged his ideology. To Hoover, the New Deal consummated his long prophecized and deepest fears. Tyranny, bureaucracy, and centralization were realities. There was no time for second-guessing. He must meet the challenge head-on. It was time to forego the tranquility of his sanctuary. By August, he wrote Ashmun Brown of his decision to publish: "My conscience will not stand it any longer."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³Hyde to Hoover, July, 1934, K-61. Former Kansas Senator Henry Allen hoped for a Hoover comeback in 1936. Allen to Hoover, June 5, 1934, K-2.

¹⁵⁴Dawes to Hoover, August 29, 1934, K-27. Dawes said that H.H. was "the natural leader of our people" and must defend their principles.

¹⁵⁵Crowther to Hoover, July 30, 1934, K-25.

¹⁵⁶Hoover to A. Brown, August 23, 1934, K-15.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHALLENGE TO LIBERTY

Rexford Tugwell, a Brains Truster, once described Hoover as "a man of principle . . . driven by duty." Although personal and political reasons were influential, ideas primarily motivated Hoover's emergence from his sanctuary.¹ During the 1930's, he earned the place of "high priest and chief theologian of conservative Republicanism, a sort of St. Thomas Aquinas who reconciled the party's principles and stated them admirably."²

As the ex-President reflected on his ideas of an "American System" and "rugged individualism," he resisted government participation in business, and opposed its restrictions, coercion, and abridgement of individual rights, and denounced the spread of graft, politics and bureaucracy.³

¹Rexford G. Tugwell, "The Protagonists: Roosevelt and Hoover," The Antioch Review, XIII (December, 1953), 419, 426. Personal vindication and a fragmented political party only added fat to the fire.

²Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 210. Christopher Morley saw H.H. as "a scholar, the man of culture, the lover of books." John Haverstick (ed.), Saturday Review Treasury (New York, 1957), 1-8.

³Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 210, 236. Hoover to A. Brown, April 13, 1934, K-15; Hoover to Fess, May 9, 1933, K-36.

Hoover sincerely feared that "corruption of the constitution" was leading to an elimination of individual freedom. By 1934, the time to protest this "eclipse of liberty" had arrived.⁴

Even before Hoover's publication efforts, financiers, skeptical of the New Deal, organized a league to defend their interests. John J. Raskob, a former Democratic National Chairman, joined Jouett Shouse, a Democratic politico, and millionaire Irenée du Pont in founding the Liberty League.⁵ John W. Davis and Al Smith, the Democratic Presidential nominees of 1924 and 1928, respectively, were also leading figures in the new organization.⁶

Despite the League's obvious hostility to the New Deal, its public goal of defending property rights, its praise of "nineteenth century individualism and liberalism," and even its eventual political move to defeat FDR, Hoover remained its outspoken critic.⁷ He expressed his contempt by saying it was "one of the humors of the time." Too, its

⁴Hoover, The Challenge to Liberty (New York, 1934), 10. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Challenge to Liberty.

⁵Strawn to Hoover, October 10, 1934, K-132; Hoover to Dawes, September 1, 1934, K-27; Wolfe, Hoover, 361; Schlesinger, New Deal, 482-487, said that conservative Democrats panicked and organized the League. Also see Burns, Lion and Fox, 206, 208.

⁶Ibid.; Hoover to Dawes, September 1, 1934, K-27.

⁷Burns, Lion and Fox, 206. Frederick Rudolph, "The American Liberty League, 1934-1940," American Historical Review, LCI (October, 1950), 20-21, 31-32, sympathetically treats the League, its ideas, and its goals.

leadership would increase the President's popularity and chances of re-election.⁸ Correspondent Ashmun Brown agreed with Hoover that the millionaires running the League had "financed all grouch movements since 1928" and that the organization was "no place for a real Republican."⁹

Although Hoover clearly enunciated his opposition to the League, several of his colleagues cautiously praised it and hoped it would weaken Roosevelt. At the least, they reasoned, its existence pointed up the division in the Democratic ranks.¹⁰ It may have colored New Deal speeches with conservative hues for a short time. Yet, Hoover and Ashmun Brown predicted a move leftward by the administration following the November election.¹¹

⁸Moos, The Republicans, 401-402. H.H. blamed the League leaders for the existing chaos. Hoover to Dawes, September 1, 1934, K-27. H.H. also said that he was "no more fond of the Wall Street model of Liberty than [that] of the Pennsylvania Avenue model." Hoover to Lawrence Sullivan, August 27, 1934, K-132. H.H. wrote Henry Fletcher that they must condemn the "Big Business" orientation of the Liberty League. Hoover to Fletcher, August 25, 1934, K-38. Burns, Lion and Fox, 206, discusses FDR's relief on learning that the conservative opposition had coalesced and organized the Liberty League.

⁹A. Brown to Hoover, September 13, 1934, and A. Brown to Hoover, November 15, 1934, K-15. Brown disclosed the press' growing disillusionment with the Liberty League.

¹⁰Knox to Hoover, September 4, 1934, K-72. Knox hoped the League would benefit the GOP and make a positive contribution to stalling the New Deal. O 'Laughlin and Silas Strawn expressed similar sentiments. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, September 6, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. Strawn to Hoover, October 10, 1934, K-132.

¹¹Hoover to Brown, October 17, and November 23, 1934, and A. Brown to Hoover, October 25, and December 6, 1934, K-15.

Hoover, recognizing his party's disturbing tendency for fragmentation and self-destruction, hoped to find a neutral, unifying ground. Liberty seemed a perfect issue. Convinced of New Deal violations of the sacred covenant, he sincerely and fervently urged a re-evaluation of New Deal methods. In a couple of articles for the Saturday Evening Post, anticipating his forthcoming book, he expressed his first public criticism of the New Deal.¹² At once, Arthur Hyde, a loyal lieutenant, detected "the influence of [Hoover's] thought in the statements of men on the street, and in the speeches of those who [were] quoted in the papers."¹³ Undoubtedly, in some circles this was the case.

As the publication date for Hoover's The Challenge to Liberty approached, the Chief's advisers and well-wishers became more excited. They anticipated a tremendous philosophical impact from the book.¹⁴ Hoover himself said:

¹²Nelsen, "Hoover Image," 160; Allen to Hoover, September 12, 1934, K-2; Silas Strawn to Hoover, October 10, 1934, K-132, praised the Post articles. Herbert Clark Hoover, "Consequences to Liberty of Regimentation," Saturday Evening Post, CCVII (September 15, 1934), 5-7. Herbert Clark Hoover, "Challenge to Liberty," Saturday Evening Post, CCVII (September 8, 1934), 5-7.

¹³Hyde to Hoover, September 13, 1934, K-61. Hyde told H.H. that the Post articles were well received, widely quoted, and very influential.

¹⁴Sullivan to Hoover, August 23, 1934, K-132; Hyde to Hoover, September 27, 1934, K-39, lauded the thesis and H.H.'s ability to steer a middle course between Wall Street and Washington. Fess to Hoover, October 17, 1934, K-36, liked H.H.'s "grasp of intricate governmental problems" and his exposure of the corruption of the public mind.

"The Republican Party has been given the Ark of the Covenant, if they have sense enough to recognize it; and they alone can protect it."¹⁵

As a "voice in the New Deal Wilderness," Hoover articulated "the anxieties of many Americans with a vigor and a clarity that he had rarely mustered while holding power."¹⁶ He was recalling an older liberalism which had permitted greater freedom to business and industry. He won many adherents to his viewpoint. Because "his philosophy never again represented a majority consensus is not to deny the devotion it continued to earn in many quarters and the significant weight it continued to bear in the modification of national attitudes and policies."¹⁷

When Hoover went to press, he strove for a muted, even subtle, attack on the New Deal. He vigorously defended individual liberty and warned of the ever existent challenges to it.¹⁸ He was struggling against time, for his was an age

¹⁵Hoover to Silas Strawn, October 15, 1934, K-132. Hoover to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., September 10, 1934, K-115. In both letters, H.H. pointed to principles and expressed his belief that Republicans alone could protect liberty.

¹⁶Clarke A. Chambers (ed.), The New Deal At Home And Abroad, 1929-1945 (New York, 1965), 103. Hereinafter cited as Chambers, New Deal.

¹⁷Ibid. Richard S. Kirkendall, "The New Deal As Watershed," Journal of American History, LIV (March, 1968), 849, says that "deep change" under FDR was impossible "because of the resistance of the opposition."

¹⁸Wolfe, Hoover, 361.

of necessitated experiment. The trends in America, which he condemned--toward regimentation, broad executive power, and planned economy--were irreversible.

In The Challenge to Liberty, Hoover defined liberty as the right to choose one's calling, to develop a skill, to earn a profit, to accumulate property, and to go as far as character and ability would allow.¹⁹ To him, liberty was "an endowment from the Creator . . . upon which no power, whether economic or political, may encroach, and that not even the government can deny." Man was master, not servant of the state. "The sole purpose of government," he said, "is to nurture and assure these liberties."²⁰

Despite the sacredness of liberty, economic blocs on the "Right," and bureaucracies on the "Left," in their respective greed for money and power, constantly challenged individual liberty.²¹ Hoover thought that revolutions sparked by any extremist group invariably used similar tactics. To him, they all defamed existing institutions, negated public confidence, and gained office through demagogic promises. Revolutionaries fomented emergencies in

¹⁹Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 2. Much of his 1934 work was a restatement of his American Individualism.

²⁰Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 3-4. According to Allan Nevius, "The Battle of 1936 Begins," Saturday Review of Literature, XI (October 6, 1934), 168, H.H., in the Spencerian tradition, saw government as a necessary evil, an "agency apart from the people."

²¹Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 6.

which the legislatures delegated extraordinary power to the executive while judicial independence was circumvented. To Hoover, revolutionaries played on the emotions while they destroyed liberty in its own house.²²

According to the philosopher of American Individualism, liberty was implicit in the religious belief and spiritual aspirations of the founding fathers. Their unique contribution to liberty was in their establishment of a division of powers, within the government, to check encroachments or imbalances between state and federal authority, or threats to the independence of the executive, legislative, or judicial branches.²³

To Hoover, liberty was the key to progress. The American System, as he defined it, provided the atmosphere for the expression of individual instincts, impulses, creativity, change, and success. As he so often stated, "no economic equality can survive the working of biological inequality."²⁴ "In its wisdom," the American System had provided "rewards to stimulate the creative instincts" of

²²Ibid., 15-17; Wolfe, Hoover, 362. H.H. was trying to claim the middle of the road. He was bending reality to fit his images and thus ignored his own experience with the Congress. That august body rarely relinquished its power for any great length of time. Once again H.H. was following his theories instead of framing them in his own experience.

²³Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 18-20.

²⁴Ibid., 23-27. Wolfe, Hoover, 362.

man.²⁵ For the rest of his life, he defended economic competition as the key to progress.

His System did not allow any group a license to exploit, for it had "within itself the forces of corrective antagonism to oppression of any kind."²⁶ Too, Hoover credited his system with humaneness, and community spirit. He thought America's economic freedom explained her gradual obliteration of social and economic classes, her higher level of education, and her exemplary quality of justice.²⁷ Hoover's increasing isolation from reality had caused him to sanctify his own ideas.

Although the Great Depression disclosed certain weaknesses and abuses in the system, Hoover rationalized that thoughtful men had long conceded the need for reform and that this did not invalidate the system. To the contrary, he thought that existing problems could be solved within that frame of government and economy traditionally followed by Americans. He often stated that the depression was atypical of the system and that there was nothing wrong with the philosophy of individualism.²⁸ As to charges of rampant individualism or laissez-faire, he explained that such an attitude ended in America during the nineteenth century. Only "reactionary souls" still yearned for such a policy.²⁹

²⁵Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 28.

²⁶Ibid., 33-34.

²⁷Ibid., 40-44.

²⁸Ibid., 46-48.

²⁹Ibid., 50-53.

Hoover praised the philosophy of individualism as a bulwark against tyranny. In its natural opposition to "regimentation and National Planning," individualism thwarted dictatorial grasps at power. He credited it with frustrating the state's attempts to consolidate power in the executive office. Once the legislature of a state capitulated, he said that executives invariably enacted a managed currency and credit, debased the coin, adopted a sales tax, and sponsored government competition with business.³⁰

In one of his more powerful analyses, Hoover warned against the regimentation of industry and commerce. He indicted federal wage and hours codes and collective agreements as coercive and unethical means to reach somewhat plausible goals.³¹ He reaffirmed his devotion to voluntarism and cooperation between the sectors of the economy.³² To

³⁰Ibid., 60, 70, 76-77, 91.

³¹Ibid., 8-84. Although H.H. never mentioned the NRA by name, it was obvious that he dissented from this degree of regulation. He admitted the states had the moral power to enact many of the codes, but he failed to see their inability to do so. Allan Nevins, Saturday Review of Literature, XI (October 6, 1934), 169-172, noted H.H.'s strong arguments against regimentation but charged the ex-President with creating a straw man, and ignoring reality.

³²Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 85-86. H.H. was furious at government suppression of agricultural production. Nevins pointed to H.H.'s agricultural failure as the best proof for the enforcement established by the AAA. Too, the AAA was in the hands of county committees chosen by the farmers themselves and supposedly responsive to their wishes and direction. Allan Nevins, "The Battle of 1936 Begins," Saturday Review of Literature, XI (October 6, 1934), 172.

Hoover, the greatest sin, however, was government purchasing, construction, operation, and sale of products, in competition with private enterprise.³³

In Hoover's mind, all national planning was national regimentation. He warned of shifts in fundamental philosophical principles, especially those disguised as emergency programs.³⁴ Ironically, he stated: "No one with a day's experience in government fails to realize that in all bureaucracies there are three implacable spirits--self-perpetuation, expansion, and an incessant demand for more power."³⁵ Hoover, who had done so much to advance federal bureaucracy and power--even if on a temporary basis--and who had laid the foundation for several New Deal programs, was shocked at the degree of change. He beat a hasty retreat. As he looked back, somewhat nostalgically at the individualistic, rural, agrarian, Jeffersonian past and compared it to the regimented, urban, industrial, mass society of the leviathan state, he must have felt some guilt. Historian George Mowry summed it up thusly: "If no one is as zealous

³³Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 88. H.H. never concealed his lifelong contempt for TVA. For an analysis of H.H.'s traditional way of thinking, and its fallacy, see Commager, The American Mind, 343-344.

³⁴Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 104-105, 111, 113-114. As Commager, The American Mind, 219-220, notes, H.H. thought the American System was irreconcilable with "planning." Like Sumner and the Conservative Darwinists, he charged the planners with regimentation, bureaucracy and dictatorship.

³⁵Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 113.

as a convert, then perhaps no one conserves what is left of his ideological inheritance more than the man who has lost part of it."³⁶

To Hoover, the greatest misfortune of the present was the increasing conflict in all areas. He was absorbed by conflict between management and labor, creditor and debtor, government and public, executive and legislature, government and private enterprise, and the distinction of classes.³⁷ Too, the expansion of federal power, via taxes, business codes, usurpation of legitimate legislative powers, and bureaucracy, assured additional conflict in the future.³⁸

In pleading for proper methods to obtain ideal goals, Hoover stated his acceptance of reform, change, responsibility, and the need for experimentation. However, he said there was "as much danger in haphazard, ill-considered experiment as in stubborn opposition to all corrective movement and change." To him, experimentation must be in harmony with liberty; thus, certain boundaries were inviolable.³⁹

He warned of bureaucratic propaganda, one-sided news

³⁶George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York, 1958), 95.

³⁷Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 119-127, 134.

³⁸Ibid., 127, 132-135.

³⁹Ibid., 145-146, 152. Wolfe, Hoover, 361, notes H.H.'s belief that methods of reform were as important as the aims.

coverage, and smear tactics against critics and dissenters: "Managed Opinion" always accompanied managed economy, managed agriculture, and managed government.⁴⁰

Hoover denied the failure of his system. In pointing to the successful correction of past abuses, he said, "We do not need to burn down the house to kill the rats."⁴¹ He thought that the regulation of the trusts, monopolies, Wall Street, and the "robber barons" represented necessary and wise restrictions of the past. Yet, "in regulation," he contended, "there must be the minimum necessary to attain true public ends."⁴² In this, he ignored the fact that the regulation he cited as good was necessarily imposed by the federal government.

Concerning the atypical depression which had raised so many questions about the American system, Hoover, promoting his personal thesis, explained that the aftermath of World War I and the despotism of Europe were direct causes. Rampant nationalism throughout the world, he theorized, had aggravated an international depression. Once the economy touched bottom in 1932, everyone began recovering. Only the United States, due to an election of a new administration and the lack of confidence in its intentions, he said, failed to recover. Yet, the system was so sound that ninety-two per cent of all bank deposits were validated, along with their

⁴⁰Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 135-136.

⁴¹Ibid., 154.

⁴²Ibid., 157, 159.

respective banks, after a brief, unnecessary closing. To him, minor reforms and adjustments were all that were required.⁴³

Although convinced of the soundness of his system, Hoover was gravely concerned about the abridgement of liberty, even on a temporary or an emergency basis. To him, regimentation was the greatest danger of modern society. He saw the breakdown of spiritual values, of the family, and of the home as an erosion of traditional safeguards. He warned, "We cannot extend the mastery of government over the daily life of a people without somewhere making it master of our souls and thoughts."⁴⁴

Men with a variety of viewpoints read Hoover's analysis of modern society, with its challenges to liberty. Reviews of the book were mixed. The Washington Daily News described it as "singularly free from personalities or bitterness."⁴⁵ The Wall Street Journal praised Hoover's dispassionate approach and his lucid analysis of "true liberalism."⁴⁶ The Christian Century termed it "the most powerful,

⁴³Ibid., 169-171, 177, 184. Wolfe, Hoover, 362.

⁴⁴Hoover, Challenge to Liberty, 191, 193, 196, 203. Even at this late date, H.H. denied a revolution had occurred within the United States. He did admit there were individuals who wanted to completely alter American society.

⁴⁵Washington Daily News, August 22, 1934, as cited in Nelsen, "Hoover Image," 160.

⁴⁶Wall Street Journal, September 28, 1934.

both in tone and argument, that has yet appeared" but questioned the former President's ability to accept change.⁴⁷

New Dealers Donald Richberg and Harold Ickes and correspondent Heywood Broun denounced Challenge to Liberty as representative of a near-anarchist frame of mind and as a politically-motivated diatribe.⁴⁸ Critic John Chamberlain said Hoover's "need for self-justification" and his overflowing bitterness were now undeniable.⁴⁹

In a third viewpoint, William Allen White said Hoover was not an enemy of the New Deal goals but of its methods.⁵⁰ Correspondent Wesley Mitchell credited the former President with a middle view, independent of the radical and conservative elements.⁵¹ Reviewer Allan Nevins categorized Hoover's book as "high ground," impersonal, restrained, principled, and a eulogy to "old standards, old aims, and old traditions."⁵²

Like the reviewers, politicians reacted diversely to

⁴⁷"Mr. Hoover on the New Deal," Christian Century, LI (October 3, 1934), 1230-1232.

⁴⁸New York Times, September 6, 1934; Washington Post, September 5, 1934, and San Francisco News, September 4, 1934, as cited by Nelsen, "Hoover Image," 160.

⁴⁹New York Times, September 28, and October 3, 1934, 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., September 28, 1934, 1.

⁵¹Wesley Mitchell, "Mr. Hoover's Challenge to Liberty," Political Science Quarterly, XLIX (1934), 599.

⁵²Allan Nevins, "The Battle of 1936 Begins," Saturday Review of Literature, XI (October 6, 1934), 155-172.

the controversial book. Some Republicans claimed it was a sacred text which would mobilize men of "reason and sanity" into a resurrection of principles for American society.⁵³ The irascible James Beck damned the "morons" of The New Republic and The Nation for trying to minimize "the value of your message."⁵⁴ Earl Warren, a rising young Republican from California, wrote his Chief, "Challenge to Liberty will always be among my most prized possessions."⁵⁵ Mills thought the Chief's book had stemmed the tide and exposed the New Deal's lack of principle. However, he urged a fresh attack along economic lines, for "the danger of individualism is too remote to interest the average man, but the economic failure is close to home."⁵⁶

The apolitical nature of the book gained little acceptance in any quarter. Spokesmen for the Administration

⁵³Henry J. Allen to Hoover, October 13, 1934, K-2, said that he carried it around "like a Mohammedan carries his Koran." Silas Strawn to Hoover, October 10, 1934, K-132, praised the common sense approach of the book. Ashmun Brown to Hoover, October 11, 1934, K-15, thanked H.H. for a "coherent and well reasoned textbook on principles of government." Lawrence Sullivan to Hoover, October 23, 1934, K-132, noted the book was "a sensational success" and that Herald-Tribune polls showed it as the top nonfiction seller in forty-one of the nation's forty-five largest bookstores.

⁵⁴Beck to Hoover, October 23, 1934, K-9.

⁵⁵Warren to Hoover, August 23, 1934, K-145.

⁵⁶Mills to Hoover, September 7, and October 1, 1934, K-92.

depreciated its value.⁵⁷ Even Republicans scoffed at the facade of nonpartisanship of the book and noted its loaded critique of New Deal methods and its pre-election timing. Obviously it was much more than a simple restatement of Hoover's philosophy of American Individualism.⁵⁸ Senator Borah, with "the Presidential bee in his bonnet," accused Hoover of firing the opening gun for a 1936 presidential bid.⁵⁹

Surprisingly, some of Hoover's most faithful lieutenants dissented on his analysis of American society. Justice Harlan Stone softly disagreed by saying that modern civilization, with all its complexity, made a return to the ideal Jeffersonian state impossible.⁶⁰ Henry Stimson,

⁵⁷Donald Richberg, Harold Ickes, and Heywood Broun wrote articles for various newspapers, condemning the book. Nelsen, "Hoover Image," 160. Hoover to Hyde, October 1, and October 8, 1934, K-39, and Strauss to Hoover, September 6, 1934, K-130, discussed the critical articles and their sources.

⁵⁸"Pawns of the State," New Republic, LXXX (September 26, 1934), 181-182. Literary Digest, CXVIII (August 25, 1934), 14, said that the book marked the return of H.H. to the political arena. Mayer, The Republicans, 432, notes H.H.'s efforts to give the GOP a constitutional issue and calls it a partisan move. "Mr. Hoover on the New Deal," Christian Century, LI (October 3, 1934), 1230-1232, speaks of the book as "a campaign manual." Cal O 'Laughlin praised the political utility of Challenge to Liberty. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, September 6, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. The Nation, CXXXIX (September 19, 1934), 313-314, noted that the book would be on the stands one month before the election.

⁵⁹Fort to Hoover, November 14, and December 12, 1934, K-38.

⁶⁰Cramer, Newton D. Baker, 263-264.

although in complete accord with Hoover's "fundamental distinction between liberalism and all other forms of government," disagreed with the Chief on the attitude of the American public. Stimson doubted the people had "abandoned the philosophy of their fathers."⁶¹

Many lawyers, journalists, and politicians recognized the political nature of Challenge to Liberty and applauded its "exposure" of dangerous policies and methods.⁶² Too, the ex-President's intentions, hardly debatable, were underlined when he urged his friends to write letters to their newspapers on Challenge to Liberty in order "to irritate the New Dealers."⁶³

As Hoover and his followers reflected on the challenges to liberty, the importance of the November election loomed ever larger. Too, Republicans throughout the nation

⁶¹Stimson to Hoover, July 12, 1934, K-129. Stimson was evaluating the draft of Challenge to Liberty which H.H. had sent him.

⁶²Oliver Street to Hoover, May 21, 1934, K-132. Allen to Hoover, October 13, 1934, K-2. Beck to Hoover, October 23, 1934, K-9. Mills to Hoover, September 7, and October 1, 1934, K-92. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, September 6, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, Strauss to Hoover, September 6, 1934, K-130.

⁶³Hoover to Allen, October 17, 1934, K-2, urged the Kansan and his friends to write letters to the editor of their newspapers concerning the book.

wrote distressing news to the ex-President.⁶⁴ Even in the farm belt, for months an area of great dissent where agrarians had denounced federal restrictions, men began to note the rise in prices and the generous government checks. The pendulum was clearly swinging in favor of the Democrats.⁶⁵ Saddened by election polls, Hoover painfully admitted, "you don't shoot Santa Claus."⁶⁶ News correspondent Frank Kent wrote: "The bribery of the nation is so complete and on such a colossal scale that I can't see any reason the New Deal should not win everything in sight at the coming

⁶⁴Spangler to Hoover, September 5, 1934, K-127; Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., to Hoover, September 4, 1934, K-15, saw no hopes of winning the East in November. Congressman Bert Snell of New York agreed that the East was "in a stupor." The GOP would have to wait until another election for the restoration of sanity. Snell to Hoover, October 17, 1934, K-126. Alan Fox to Hoover, September 17, 1934, K-39, conceded New York to Democrats and noted that the strongest men in the party refused to make the sacrifice. Fox to Hoover, October 3, 1934, K-39, said that personalities, not issues, would assure the Democrats a November sweep. He also confessed the GOP was still badly divided. Chairman Henry Fletcher wrote H.H., August 31, 1934, K-38, that Republicans would gain few if any seats in the Senate. Also see A. Brown to Hoover, October 11, 1934, K-15.

⁶⁵Spangler to Hoover, September 5, 1934, K-127; Hyde to Hoover, September 13, 1934, K-61; Allen to Hoover, October 13, 1934, K-2; Strawn to Hoover, October 10, 1934, K-132, bemoaned the dole and the votes it assured for the Democrats; Senator Dickinson charged the Democrats with "buying favoritism" and implementing Tammany methods on a national scale. Dickinson to Hoover, November 1, 1934, K-29. Ogden Mills wrote H.H. that Democrats were setting records throughout the nation in their "colossal outpouring of funds." Mills to Hoover, September 7, and October 1, 1934, K-92.

⁶⁶Hoover to Spangler, September 10, 1934, K-127; Hoover to Lewis Strauss, September 10, 1934, K-130, admitted that the GOP's hopes looked lean for November.

election."⁶⁷ As Tammany methods swept across the nation,⁶⁸ Hoover feared that the people had "abandoned all their creative thought."⁶⁹

Aside from the lean Republican prospects, Hoover lamented the failure of so many party candidates to defend principles or attack the major issues. To him, "jelly-fish" politicians were accepting fifty per cent of FDR's platform, and Vandenberg was "a profound example."⁷⁰ Frank Knox tried to bolster his Chief's morale by showing that some Republicans were dispensing "the good, old-fashioned gospel."⁷¹ Unreconciled, Hoover's faith in the party's future declined.⁷²

Following the disastrous November election, Hoover and Chairman Fletcher grasped at every straw. Admitting the

⁶⁷Kent to Hoover, October 8, 1934, K-61.

⁶⁸Dickinson to Hoover, November 1, 1934, K-29.

⁶⁹Hoover to Will Irwin, August 27, 1934, K-61; Hoover to Knox, October 2, 1934, K-72, began to doubt the party's future.

⁷⁰Hoover to Hyde, October 1, 1934, K-61; Hoover to Hurley, September 11, 1934, K-60; Hoover to Allen, October 17, 1934, K-2; Hoover to Knox, October 2, 1934, K-72; Hoover to Reed, October 17, 1934, K-107, praised the Pennsylvanian for "fighting the campaign on its main issue and the real question of principle." Hoover to Tox, October 8, 1934, K-39, praised Reed and Fess as the only ones not "trying to pussyfoot into office." H.H. was probably upset with the assaults on his administration and the weak defense of it by congressional Republicans. For example, see Cong. Rec., 73 Cong. 2 Sess. (February 1, February 5, 1934), 1784-1785, 1795, 1934.

⁷¹Knox to Hoover, October 23, 1934, K-72.

⁷²Hoover to Knox, October 2, 1934, K-72.

party's loss within Congress, they hoped it was gaining new strength outside. Although GOP totals had fallen since 1932, they noted that the Democrats had lost seven million votes. Consequently, they concluded that the party was still alive, even strong, and had been beaten by money.⁷³

Hoover tried to boost party morale and rally an opposition.⁷⁴ Republicans everywhere recognized the difficult task they faced in the new Congress.⁷⁵ Hoover thought that the California election, where "sane" (conservative) Democrats allied with the GOP to defeat the radical candidates, portended an important lesson for the future.⁷⁶

⁷³Fort to Hoover, November 7, 1934, K-38, noted that Jersey Republicans ran less attractive candidates and suffered from a shortage of funds. Hoover to Fletcher, November 8, 1934, and Fletcher to Hoover, November 12, 1934, K-38. Hoover to Fess, November 9, 1934, K-36, and Hoover to Dickinson, November 9, 1934, K-29, discussed the heavy spending by the Democrats. Hoover to Reed, November 9, 1934, K-107. O'Laughlin to Hoover, November 12, 1934, K-101, pointed to the relief rolls, the many concessions to Labor, the GOP division, FDR's personality, and higher farm prices, as explanations of the expansion of Democratic totals. O'Laughlin noted the GOP, with forty-six per cent, was strong enough to challenge the New Deal in the future. Despite the November setback, the Literary Digest polls were most encouraging.

⁷⁴Hoover to Snell, November 9, 1934, K-126; Hoover to Vandenberg, November 13, 1934, K-141.

⁷⁵"Defeatism stalked through the Republican camp." E. Francis Brown, "The Moral of the Elections," Current History, XLI (December, 1934), 279-283. Vandenberg to Hoover, November 8, 1934, K-141.

⁷⁶Hoover to Snell, November 9, 1934, K-126; Hoover to Vandenberg, November 13, 1934, K-141. Hoover hoped GOP leaders in Congress might gain the cooperation of "sane" Democrats to thwart the New Deal. Later, Vandenberg would become the famous advocate of bipartisanship in Congress.

Hooverite Arch Shaw of Chicago, in a sourgrapes mood, concluded that the elimination of Republican candidates who refused to defend the Hoover Administration and attack New Deal transgressions was proper.⁷⁷ However, Senator Dave Reed, Pennsylvania's powerful GOP leader, a firm advocate of the Hoover line, had suffered an ignominious defeat. Fess and other stalwarts had been unseated.⁷⁸ Nothing could cover the fact that the GOP had lost ten more Senate seats and nineteen additional House seats.⁷⁹ Regardless of what they said to one another, Hooverites could find little consolation. In bitterness, Reed said that the election was "an auction" and "an endorsement of [nothing] but ready cash."⁸⁰ Hoover assured the Pennsylvanian he would "be more effective in awakening the public mind outside of the halls of the Senate than even in them."⁸¹ Pennsylvania voters agreed.

⁷⁷Shaw to Hoover, November 9, 1934, K-119. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, November 12, 1934, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, agreed with the opinion that some Republicans were deserving of defeat. Ashmun Brown to Hoover, November 15, 1934, K-15, believed that the GOP invariable nominated weak candidates for the 1934 races.

⁷⁸Hoover to Reed, November 9, 1934, and Reed to Hoover, November 20, 1934, K-107. Mayer, The Republicans, 432-435; E. Francis Brown, "The Moral of the Elections," Current History, XLI (December, 1934), 278-283, said that the defeats of Reed and Fess were particularly stinging.

⁷⁹Mayer, The Republicans, 432-435.

⁸⁰Reed to Hoover, November 20, 1934, K-107, although recognizing that money had beaten him, could not understand how the American "people were fooled so easily."

⁸¹Hoover to Reed, November 9, 1934, K-107.

As Republicans reflected on the November debacle and their own internal divisions, they recognized that the time for national reorganization had arrived. Once again, however, they differed on the proper method for revival. Cal O 'Laughlin expressed a widely held contention that there were too many prima donnas at the national level. In the Senate alone, Republican individualists like McNary, Hiram Johnson, Norris, Borah, Nye, and even Vandenberg refused to follow sound leadership. Old Guard leaders in the East refused to make concessions within the party organization and hence progressive-Old Guard quarrels were frequent.⁸² Someone from the center would have to revitalize the party, and to Hooverites there was only one man for the job.⁸³

As Jerseyite Franklin Fort informed the Chief, following a conference with Borah and publisher Frank Gannett, all wings of the party wanted an alteration in the Republican image. Too long, Democrats had pinned the GOP with placing "property rights before human rights." Although Fort knew the two were inseparable, he recognized the problem.⁸⁴ Like his Chief, the Jersey adviser hoped to improve the party's image and remain "left to Hilles, Pomeroy, and Roraback" without moving in the direction of the

⁸²O 'Laughlin to Hoover, November 12, 1934, K-101.

⁸³Ibid.; Hyde to Hoover, November 19, 1934, K-61.

⁸⁴Fort to Hoover, November 14, 1934, K-38.

New Deal.⁸⁵

Progressives William Allen White and Roy Roberts of Kansas also spoke for a revitalization of the party. However, they thought a Midwesterner, not closely identified with the past administration, would serve as the best consolidator. Both noted the availability of Frank Knox.⁸⁶

As efforts to remold the national party gained momentum, the various state parties attempted to reorganize. Earl Warren, the chairman of the Republican State Central Committee in California, wrote his Chief asking for a conference. The purpose was to discuss the future of the state party.⁸⁷

By late November, Hoover, pondering if his mail or his recent public receptions signified anything, became increasingly anxious to commence a public debate on issues. He even encouraged a public request for his return to the stump.⁸⁸ Since the printed word had failed to awaken the

⁸⁵Hoover to Fort, November 17, 1934, and Fort to Hoover, December 12, 1934, K-38. As to Borah, the ex-President said, "he constitutionally just must be against everything. If ever there was a program . . . in line with Borah's sentiments" it was the New Deal.

⁸⁶Hyde to Hoover, November 19, 1934, K-61. The Missourian, following a talk with White and Roberts, reiterated his belief that H.H. alone had "the name, the vision or the popular support to undertake the task."

⁸⁷Warren to Hoover, November 23, 1934, K-145.

⁸⁸Hoover to Hyde, November 23, 1934, K-61. "I am wondering if a group of 100 representative men over the country could be organized to make a request that I undertake a constructive debate of the measures before Congress . . . as a needed public service."

populace to its danger, perhaps public addresses would revitalize America's conscience and bring her back to the idea of liberty.

CHAPTER V

ON THE ROAD

As the new year began, the ex-President prepared to take to the road with a series of public addresses which he hoped would reawaken America's conscience. As Raymond Moley once said: "No politician would wish his words and actions to be known as political; to deny political motives is a first principle in the political art."¹ Hoover, never "permitting himself to rust in inactivity,"² carried on his prolific correspondence, issued numerous statements, sent memos to his aides, penned articles, and framed speeches throughout the early months of 1935.³

Hooverites, aware of their Chief's decision to abandon his sanctuary, vied for the opportunity to publicize his public pronouncements. Harrison Spangler, the Iowa national

¹Moley, First New Deal, 7.

²Moos, The Republicans, 395.

³Hinshaw, Hoover, 304, says that H.H. spent 1933-1934 reflecting on events. Then, in the spring of 1935, "he went forth to preach, according to his light, the gospel of the place of government in the life of an individual, the place of the individual in his relations with other individuals and government, and the place of the individual in God's unfolding purpose for the universe." See Hofstadter, Political Tradition, 308, concerning H.H.'s assumption of "the role of a hopeful Jeremiah."

committeeman, pushed for a Midwestern Republican conference in Chicago to demonstrate GOP vitality and to reassure the public. He indicated the willingness of non-Hooverites such as John D. M. Hamilton of Kansas to cooperate in the rally. Too, Spangler thought that it was an opportune time to push for a reorganization of the party.⁴ In January, Hoover, ostensibly on a business trip, conferred with Chicago Republicans.⁵ Walter Newton, having learned of a Young Republican meeting planned for Lincoln's birthday at Springfield, urged his Chief to speak on this auspicious occasion and expressed the hope that such an address would be aimed at young Republicans of the Midwest.⁶

Meanwhile, Hoover and Ashmun Brown continued to analyze Roosevelt's budget and express disgust with the administration's attempts to disguise its actual spending. They found that FDR was transferring all public construction and reclamation costs from their normal categories to the "Recovery and Relief" section, and then dispensing false reports of a government surplus.⁷

Will Irwin, the Chief's closest friend, disclosed the

⁴Spangler to Hoover, January 4, 1935, K-127.

⁵Hoover Collection, LXIV (January 6, 1935), Item 2176A.

⁶Walter Newton to Hoover, January 22, 1935, K-97.

⁷A. Brown to Hoover, January 14, 1935, and Hoover to A. Brown, January 18, 1935, K-15. Both men blasted FDR's dual budget system.

most startling political discovery. Irwin, on a trip to New Orleans, learned that the "Louisiana dictator," Senator Huey P. Long, was planning to run on a third-party ticket in the presidential election of 1936. The "ingenuous Long" expected to split the Democratic vote, thus assuring the Republicans of victory. In return, Long expected the GOP to reward him with "all the patronage south of the Mason and Dixon Line." With this financial power base, the "Kingfish" could seriously bid for the White House in 1940.⁸

On February 12, Lincoln's Birthday, the former President attended the National Republican Club Dinner in New York City. In a few brief remarks, Hoover praised Lincoln's most admirable qualities of individuality, self-reliance, courage, patience, tolerance, and intellectual honesty. Hoover also made a plea for personal liberty and warned that the public must always be master and "not the pawns of the state."⁹

Having broken his two year's silence, Hoover soon

⁸Irwin to Hoover, January 24, 1935, K-62. To Irwin, Long was, "in his crooked, unscrupulous way, a genius." Concerning the Long strategy, see T. Harry Williams, Huey Long, 794-801.

⁹New York Times, February 13, 1935, 1. Hoover Collection, LXIV (February 12, 1935), Item 2180. Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism In America (New York, 1955), 187-191, notes that H.H. like all classical liberals, was devoted to Jeffersonian phrases and ideas. Liberty was a favorite word with which to defend laissez-faire. Inasmuch as a man's eulogy often describes characteristics the speaker himself admires, Hoover's speech revealed his own desires.

issued a public statement praising the Supreme Court's decision negating America's repudiation of the gold clause. Hoover, a traditional defender of the gold standard and an arch-opponent of any repudiation of the Covenant, foresaw a restoration of confidence in the dollar and hoped for a re-establishment of the gold standard. He contended that such action would restore jobs, create new ones, lower the living costs, reassure creditors, and check inflation.¹⁰

Following Hoover's February barrages, Kansas Governor Alf Landon, possibly courting the ex-President's favor, struck up a correspondence with Hoover. Landon, praising Hoover's "penetrating" economic analyses, stated: "I hope the country, as well as the party, may have the benefit of a more active interest in politics on your part."¹¹ Such words must have been sweet music to Hoover's ears.

Cal O 'Laughlin, ever laudatory, expressed his and Justice James Clark McReynolds' agreement with Hoover's gold statement.¹² Hoover, aware of the political repercussions his public views had caused, regretted that no other Republican had been willing to protest the moral issues. To

¹⁰New York Times, February 21, 1935, 1. Hoover Collection, LXIV (February 20, 1935), Item 2185. See Cong. Rec., 74 Cong. 1 Sess. (February 21, 1935), 2379. According to Nelsen, "Hoover Press Image," 167-168, H.H. reclaimed his role as spokesman for the "opposition" in his gold statement.

¹¹Landon to Hoover, February 22, 1935, K-74.

¹²O 'Laughlin to Hoover, February 23, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

Hyde, he disclosed, "I will not keep still any longer, and I am going to periodically shoot at the situation."¹³

Despite Hoover's efforts to breathe life into the GOP corpse, other party leaders failed to exemplify his aggressive lead. O 'Laughlin continued to inundate his Chief's desk with pessimistic letters concerning the abuses of the NRA, AAA, and other alphabetical organizations. O 'Laughlin forecast even greater chasms and disasters in the future.¹⁴ Hoover, in turn, wrote his lieutenants of "a real degeneration of the economic situation." He wished for Hyde's aid in drafting a forthcoming address.¹⁵

Despite unusually strong opposition on the part of his advisers, Hoover prepared a stinging message for the Young Republican Convention assembling at Sacramento.¹⁶ Perturbed at the National Committee and Republican Congressional leaders, Hoover, although aware of the political folly, decided to unburden his conscience. He reasoned that his unselfishness, and the hari-kari tone of his act, would prove his disinterest in further political office. Too, he hoped that his GOP critics would realize, despite their

¹³Hoover to Hyde, February 25, 1935, K-61.

¹⁴O 'Laughlin to Hoover, March 2, March 9, March 16, March 23, and March 30, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. H.H.'s pessimistic Washington adviser moved steadily to the "right" throughout the 1930's.

¹⁵Hoover to Hyde, March 15, 1935, K-61.

¹⁶Hoover to Hyde, March 17, 1935, K-61.

selfish motives, that there was "such a thing as patriotism in the world."¹⁷

In his address to the Sacramento Convention, the former President urged young Republicans to accept "The Responsibility of the Republican Party to the Nation." He insisted on a "defense of fundamental American principles" and a restoration of the Constitution. "The newly created system of regimentation and bureaucratic domination," he said, "must be scrapped." To Hoover, the future of the country depended on a rejuvenation of a vigorous GOP organization. He thought that the incumbent administration had repudiated its obligations, debased the currency, multiplied the national debt, bureaucratized every facet of the economy, crushed competition, restricted production, abetted monopoly, violated the Constitution, and abridged individual liberty. Hoover demanded a change in methods. To him, real recovery was possible only through individual initiative and a new opportunity free of regimentation and bureaucratic tyranny.¹⁸

¹⁷Hoover to Hyde, March 19, 1935, K-61.

¹⁸"The Responsibility of the Republican Party to the Nation," Herbert Hoover, Addresses Upon The American Road, 1933-1938 (New York, 1938), 40-44. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Addresses on the Road. New York Times, March 24, 1935, 1. Hoover Collection, LXIV (March 23, 1935), Item 2187. H.H. bemoaned the acceleration of class conflict. He hoped for a restoration of the traditional place of the family, and of the home, in men's lives. Democratic Congressman Fred H. Hilderbrandt, a constant critic, lambasted H.H.'s return to political activity. The South Dakotan said that it was tragic that Hoover wanted to revive a reactionary element which had continually impeded progress. Cong. Rec., 74 Cong. 1 Sess. (March 25, 1935), 4403.

Correspondent Lawrence Sullivan wrote the ex-President: "The Sacramento declaration is a smash!" It provided a rallying point for all New Deal opponents. For the first time in two years, "the banner is up."¹⁹ In championing an aggressive attack on the New Deal, Arthur Hyde blasted the "opportunism and cowardice of others" and urged Hoover to give no quarter to the enemy. He reminded his Chief that "he who would be greatest among you shall be minister of all."²⁰ Rank and file Republicans were pleased with the former President's return to the arena and applauded his vigorous defense of "justice" and "right."²¹

Although Hoover, searching for a method to gain greater endorsement of his ideas, had hoped for a vigorous "grass roots expression of Republicanism" from the Resolutions Committee of Midwest Republicans assembling in Kansas City, a distressed Hyde reported the failure of the committee to enunciate principles or indict the New Deal.²² The Missourian also noted a deterioration in party harmony as the Kansas clique pushed a Knox-Landon ticket for 1936. To Hyde, if Republicans would only defend a principle, "they can then

¹⁹Sullivan, Memo #28, March 24, 1935, K-132.

²⁰Hyde to Hoover, March 23, 1935, K-61.

²¹For example, see John Broom to Hoover, March 25, 1935, K-15, and Oliver Street to Hoover, April 1, 1935, K-132.

²²Hoover to Knox, March 1, 1935, K-72, urged the Chicago leader to move his group toward a positive defense of their principles. Hyde to Hoover, March 20, 1935, K-61.

do their worst on candidates."²³ Charles H. Hilles, the national committeeman and New York "boss," concerned about the continued splintering of the party, urged a private Hoover-Hilles-Fletcher conference to discuss the party's future.²⁴

Despite the setback at the Kansas City conclave, Spangler promoted another Midwestern conference for early June. He believed that such a move would provide an excellent chance to rally the prairie belt to Hooverian ideas. Recognizing the need to avoid further squabbles over presidential candidacies, he pressed the leaders for the selection of a neutral speaker. Hyde wanted to invite Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh to address the meeting.²⁵ Their Chief, thinking in political terms, had a better idea. Having reopened contact with Governor Lowden during the 1934 chairmanship fight and having cultivated the friendship of this old Progressive, Hoover, recognizing the Illinoian's influence with other segments of the party and anxious to promote harmony, suggested that Lowden was the ideal choice for speaker. Although the former politico had enjoyed seven years of retirement, Hoover personally visited him in

²³Hyde to Hoover, March 20, 1935, K-61.

²⁴Hilles to Hoover, March 21, 1935, K-54.

²⁵Spangler to Hoover, March 26, 1935, K-127.

Illinois and coaxed him into making the Springfield address.²⁶

With the growing belief, obtained through his steady correspondence, that his efforts were creating "a change in public psychology," Hoover began to take heart at America's future. He was convinced that the time was ripe for a declaration of principles and a staunch defense of his past record with its "positive" solutions for the depression. To him, only the New Deal had prevented recovery.²⁷ As William Allen White had stated, inflationists and jealous Republicans continued "to hurl garbage" at the ex-President because they failed to recognize the depth of his economic analyses.²⁸ Yet, to Hoover, even the disbelievers were potential converts.

Hoover's return to political activity received applause from a variety of Republicans. An Alabama lawyer expressed the hope that the former President would run the New Dealers out of Washington.²⁹ Relief associate Vernon Kellogg praised his Chief as the natural "leader of the

²⁶William T. Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois (Chicago, 1957), II, 678-680. Following Hoover's lead, Knox and Hyde readily conferred with Lowden concerning the Springfield Conference.

²⁷Stone to Hoover, March 23, 1935, and Hoover to Stone, March 29, 1935, K-130. Both men perceived a change in the public mood. Also see Hoover to Spangler, March 29, 1935, K-127.

²⁸White to Hoover, February 26, and March 4, 1935, K-147.

²⁹Olive Street to Hoover, April 1, 1935, K-132.

Republican party."³⁰ Governor Landon, excited at Hoover's reassertion of leadership, said: "I, for one, am happy to follow your leadership and will be glad to receive suggestions from you at any time."³¹

During April, talk of presidential candidates surfaced at every Republican conclave. Hanford MacNider, who had been promoting a Knox boomlet for over a month, began to see dividends.³² In fact, Knox, a former Bull Mooser, seeing the rapid momentum his candidacy was gaining, began to fear a "premature" enthusiasm.³³ Nonetheless, following a Chicago conference with Hoover, Knox, in a private letter to MacNider, disclosed the confidential admission that their Chief, "in the most specific terms, [stated] that he would never be a candidate again." The Chicagoan, sympathizing with Hoover, recognized the necessity for keeping his silence in order to maintain a degree of influence within the party.³⁴

In spite of, or because of, Hoover's renewed activity, Republican divisions became more evident. Hoover, lamenting

³⁰Kellogg to Hoover, April 1, 1935, K-67.

³¹Landon to Hoover, April 4, 1935, K-74.

³²Knox to MacNider, March 1, 1935, Series 5, Box 73, Hanford MacNider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

³³Knox to MacNider, April 5, 1935, Series 5, Box 73, Hanford MacNider Papers.

³⁴Knox to MacNider, April 5, 1935, Series 5, Box 73, Hanford MacNider Papers.

the lack of cohesion in the party, told Knox that GOP leaders panicked every time he left Palo Alto.³⁵ Hilles, in a letter to Spangler, expressed the belief that the Midwestern conclave must promote party harmony and concentrate on New Deal failures rather than Republican personalities.³⁶ O 'Laughlin reported a Fletcher-Hamilton split within the national headquarters.³⁷

Magazines began speaking of the former President's busy activities, especially his conferences with Eastern GOP leaders.³⁸ As rumors flew concerning Hoover's candidacy as well as his decision not to run again, his lieutenants urged him to make no statements which would weaken his influence or imply endorsement of any other candidate.³⁹ To them, a disavowal would minimize his influence. Too, Congressional leaders, long envious of his popularity with rank and file Republicans, would say that he was simply recognizing the fact that he had no chance at the nomination.⁴⁰

³⁵Hoover to Knox, April 29, 1935, K-72. Also see the New York Times, May 8, 1935, 1, concerning House leaders' fear of another Hoover candidacy.

³⁶Hilles to Spangler, April 22, 1935, K-54.

³⁷O 'Laughlin to Hoover, April 27, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

³⁸News-Week, V (April 27, 1935), 17.

³⁹A. Brown to Hoover, April 29, 1935, K-15; O 'Laughlin to Hoover, April 21, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

⁴⁰Ibid.; A. Brown to Hoover, April 29, 1935, K-15.

As speculation on presidential possibilities mounted, Hoover became agitated at the efforts of Eastern newspapers to credit him with promoting the presidential aspirations of Ogden Mills. Although the ex-President greatly admired his former Treasury Secretary, he knew that Mills was not a candidate, or interested in becoming one. Too, Hoover discounted the availability of any Eastern candidate and was convinced that the next Republican nominee would be from the Midwest. Although it was too early to endorse any of the candidates, Hoover concluded that "the man I do support will from that moment lead the race."⁴¹

As the Midwest Conference approached, Hoover and several of his colleagues hoped for the revival of the party through a series of successful regional conferences.⁴² Mills, following his statement that "under no circumstances will I be a candidate for office," noted a marked improvement in his relations with Vandenberg, Knox, Landon, and other aspirants. Consequently, Mills sought their cooperation in framing a declaration of principles at the forthcoming

⁴¹Hoover to A. Brown, April 27, 1935, and A. Brown to Hoover, April 29, 1935, K-15. Both men were convinced that a man from the West would be the 1936 nominee. Hoover to O'Laughlin, April 27, 1935, K-101, wondered if the Eastern press would ever realize that Mills was disinterested. H.H. hoped that some of the presidential aspirants would awaken to the value of his personal endorsement of their candidacy.

⁴²Kellogg to Hoover, April 27, 1935, K-67; Hoover to A. Brown, May 3, 1935, K-15; Hoover to Creager, May 16, 1935, K-25.

Midwestern Conference.⁴³

Prior to the conclave, Hyde worked on a draft of his own principles while Spangler pressed William Allen White to accept the lead role in advocating a platform with Hooverian ideas. Although the Kansan expressed general agreement on issues, for personal reasons, he hesitated to participate officially.⁴⁴ Hoover, anxious for White's participation, wrote the Kansan that the time had come to defend their principles. He urged White to move party leaders toward a statement which defended the GOP record and pointed up the international origins of the depression, the recovery underway in 1932 (prior to the election and panic), the constitutional violations by the New Deal, and the direction to true recovery.⁴⁵ White, disturbed at the Republican failure to formulate a constructive program and anxious to avoid embroilment in the factional disputes of his party, declined the leadership role of the approaching conference.⁴⁶

Colonel Creager theorized that factionalism was

⁴³Mills to Hoover, May 13, 1935, K-92. Donald R. McCoy, "Alfred M. Landon and the Presidential Campaign of 1936," Mid-America, XLII (October, 1960), 204, says that Mills was an official Landon adviser during the campaign.

⁴⁴Hyde to Hoover, May 10, 1935, K-61. Spangler to Hoover, May 13, 1935, K-127. Hyde to Hoover, April 29, 1935, K-61, expressed doubt concerning the Kansan's ability to formulate "a decently conservative platform."

⁴⁵Hoover to Spangler, May 10, 1935, K-127.

⁴⁶Hoover to Spangler, May 10, 1935, and Spangler to Hoover, May 13, 1935, K-127.

destroying the Republican Party. He hoped that the 1936 nominee would be able to reunite the party.⁴⁷ Hoover, equally concerned over the internal blood-letting, was more disturbed at the talk of a new coalition party, perhaps a Constitutional Party. To Hoover, history had proven the lack of wisdom in third-party moves, and he doubted that the South would leave the Democratic fold except for a deep emotional aversion such as in 1928.⁴⁸ He hoped that Creager and other intelligent Republican leaders of the South would nip the move before it blossomed.⁴⁹ In a letter which hardly reassured the ex-President, Creager expressed his personal belief that Jeffersonian Democrats would align with Republicans in 1936 "if we nominate a proper candidate and adopt the kind of platform" required.⁵⁰

Creager, aluding the former President's broadsides at "the socialistic crowd in Washington," thought that the speeches were taking positive effect.⁵¹ Frank Knox also noted a growing dissatisfaction with the New Deal. Like Hoover, the Chicagoan thought that the GOP needed to mobilize and take advantage of the situation. To Knox, Henry Fletcher

⁴⁷Creager to Hoover, May 10, 1935, K-25.

⁴⁸Hoover to Creager, May 16, 1935, K-25.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Creager to Hoover, May 29, 1935, K-25, named Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia as the Jeffersonian the South would most readily accept.

⁵¹Creager to Hoover, May 10, 1935, K-25.

was a failure as National Chairman, and only the aggressive John Hamilton of Kansas showed any organizational talent at party headquarters.⁵² However, the division, even at the top of the organization, was related to presidential ambitions.

Ogden Mills, having reassured Knox and others of the sincerity in his personal disavowals, now moved through the camps of the different presidential aspirants.⁵³ Mills decided that Knox was the leading contender. He also learned that Hamilton and Senator Capper of Kansas were leaning toward the Chicagoan. Rumors even flew around that Borah was about to endorse Knox.⁵⁴

By early 1935, Senator Borah and various Progressives were accusing the NRA of discrimination and of abetting monopoly. In March, 1935, Roosevelt appointed a commission, headed by Clarence Darrow, to investigate the codes, their coercion, and their negative results. When no reports were printed and no Republican leader questioned the failure to publicize the commission's findings, Hoover decided to

⁵²Knox to Hoover, May 1, and May 6, 1935, K-72.

⁵³Mills to Knox, May 9, 1935, Box 11, Ogden Mills Papers, Library of Congress. Knox to Gordon O 'Neill, May 15, 1935, Box 11, Ogden Mills Papers. Creager to Hoover, May 10, 1935, K-25.

⁵⁴Ibid.

provide "some intellectual leadership for the party."⁵⁵ On May 15, he issued a press statement on the NRA, indicting it as "un-American in principle and a proved failure in practice." To him, the codes had retarded recovery by increasing the "costs of production and distribution, and therefore prices." He said that non-consumption and unemployment were the end results. He charged the NRA with encouraging monopoly by allowing certain violaters to bypass the anti-trust laws. He noted a new degree of coercion and intimidation by federal bureaucrats. He concluded that "we do not construct new buildings on false foundations, and we cannot build a nation's economy on a fundamental error." He called for specific statutory laws abolishing the abuses which the NRA had, in spite of its shortcomings, sought to overcome.⁵⁶

As Hoover accelerated his activities, he noted and

⁵⁵Hoover to Creager, May 16, 1935, K-25. H.H.'s charges were endorsed in the U. S. Senate Committee on Finance, 74 Cong., 1 Sess. Hearings: Investigation of the National Recovery Administration (Washington, 1935), 1101, 1271, 1304-1307, 2010, 2215, 2396, 2399, 2602, 2604, 2669, 2633, 2891, 2847. The testimony underlined the lack of uniformity in administering the codes, the defective weaknesses in the codes, the coercion, the circumvention of the anti-trust laws, the destruction of competition, especially the detriment to small business, and the impediments to national recovery.

⁵⁶Hoover Collection, LXIV (May 15, 1935), Item 2195; New York Times, May 16, 1935, 1; Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 45-48. On May 24, H.H. issued an additional statement on the NRA, concentrating on its methods. Hoover Collection, LXIV (May 24, 1935), Item 2197. See Ogden L. Mills, What of Tomorrow? (New York, 1935), 10-14, 65, 121-217. Mills used Hooverian language in criticizing the NRA and economic planning as violations of individual liberty.

drew satisfaction from the "squirming" of his opponents.⁵⁷ The ex-President continued to work for regional conferences which would endorse his ideas. Willis C. Hawley of Oregon, an author of the controversial 1930 tariff, sent Hoover a list of Beaver State Republicans of "political experience and influence" who shared their belief in "the great principles of the Republican Party."⁵⁸

On May 27, the Supreme Court invalidated the NRA as unconstitutional. Hooverites saw the decision as a personal victory for their Chief as it was "in accord with the views you have been publicly expressing."⁵⁹

Although Hoover was pleased with the Supreme Court's decision, he was uneasy about the new proposals of the Administration. Throughout June, he received letters from O 'Laughlin describing an acceleration of demagoguery, political opportunism, power grabs, and violations of individual rights.⁶⁰ Hoover became so obsessed with O 'Laughlin's pessimism that he turned his Chicago parley with Governor

⁵⁷Hoover to O 'Laughlin, May 20, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

⁵⁸Willis C. Hawley to Hoover, May 31, 1935, K-50. Hawley informed H.H. that the Oregon party was as badly divided as the national organization.

⁵⁹Creager to Hoover, May 29, 1935, K-25. Doctor Joel T. Boone to Hoover, June 6, 1935, K-14, noted, "your sound decisions upheld." O 'Laughlin to Hoover, May 28, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, praised H.H.'s sagacity. See Mason, Supreme Court, 84.

⁶⁰O 'Laughlin to Hoover, June 1, June 7, June 15, June 22, and June 29, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers.

Lowden into a discussion "of the administration's proposals to change to a European form of government."⁶¹

The Springfield Conference loomed as a crucial event. Hoover wired the delegates to fight for American principles. They could "give heart to the country."⁶² Despite the initial success of the Hooverites in drawing up resolutions which dissented from various New Deal methods, the convention soon strayed from the Hoover path.⁶³ Governor Lowden's Springfield speech was all the Hooverites could have hoped for as it indicted the New Deal's NRA and AAA. The latter attack surprised some delegates to the extent that Hoover was charged with writing the speech and then persuading Lowden "to deliver it because of his greater influence with rural Republicans." Actually, Lowden's speech was aimed primarily at the NRA but due to a few critical remarks on the AAA, the speech was misinterpreted. Notwithstanding, it had the Hoover tone.⁶⁴

Despite mixed reports thereafter, the Convention acted independently of the Hooverites' advice. The

⁶¹Hoover Collection, LXIV (June 4, 1935), Item 2200; New York Times, June 4, 1935, 1.

⁶²Hoover Collection, LXIV (June 6, 1935), Item 2201. A message to Springfield Republican Grassroots Convention.

⁶³Hyde to Hoover, June 13, 1935, K-61.

⁶⁴Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, II, 681. The Lowden biographer positively denies any Hoover authorship and credits Lowden with penning the entire speech, even the remarks on the AAA.

Resolutions Committee endorsed a farm plank which included an "equalization fee," anathema to Hyde. Too, the Missourian was beside himself at its failure to include "a statement on the cause of the depression" and to point out Roosevelt's role in abetting it.⁶⁵ Arch Shaw of Chicago denounced the Springfield conclave for rejecting Hoover's depression theory and urged the ex-President to explain the "facts" to the nation.⁶⁶ In a less objective report, Creager informed Hoover that the conference was a great success. He noted a new harmony and enthusiasm. He said that divisive issues like agriculture had been avoided and that "there was absolutely no evidence of the beginnings of organized candidacies." But then, Creager had conferred mainly with Hurley, Hyde, Lowden, and Fletcher.⁶⁷

Following the Springfield Convention, Ashmun Brown noted the increasing number of anti-New Deal editorials, and wrote Hoover that his Challenge to Liberty and his recent public statements were responsible for the growing signs of courage. To Brown, Hoover's inspiration was reflected in Judicial decisions and New Deal criticism by men in the street.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Hyde to Hoover, June 13, 1935, K-61. Newton to Hoover, June 15, 1935, K-97, shared Hyde's disappointment. Newton thought that the depression issue could not be avoided and that the GOP erred in not "facing it squarely."

⁶⁶Shaw to Hoover, June 21, 1935, K-119.

⁶⁷Creager to Hoover, June 22, 1935, K-25.

⁶⁸A. Brown to Hoover, June 14, 1935, K-15.

On June 16, Hoover delivered the commencement address at his alma mater, Stanford University. He spoke on the "Essentials of Social Growth in America." Aware of public interest in "so-called social security," he enumerated the principles of true security as the freedom "to develop their own talents and to be rewarded for their effort" and "the capacity to produce a plenty of goods and services with which to give economic security to the whole of us," as well as a set of constitutional "checks and balances" and independence from the "concentration of economic or political power." The ex-President reaffirmed his belief that "there are no short cuts. . . . Social security must be built upon a cult of work, not a cult of leisure."⁶⁹ Again, the former President had enunciated an unmistakable stand against a New Deal proposal. Again, he had reaffirmed his belief in American Individualism.

Hoover's was not the first voice raised in opposition to social security proposals. Weeks earlier two Negro writers denounced the idea as a political trick. They noted that in the "black belt," states would control the Negro's social security check and would continue the discrimination

⁶⁹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 51-57. Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, 80-86, notes H.H.'s classical liberal approach to security. Wilbur and Hyde, Hoover Policies, 48-52, 91, note H.H.'s idea that "personal thrift" was the key. Too, H.H. favored an old-age plan through private mutual life insurance companies with low premium payments. Also see "Hoover: Ex-President Gives His Idea of 'Social Security,'" News-Week, V (February 23, 1935), 9.

that existed in other areas. According to them, only a "pollyanna optimist" could fail to see through the AAA, the NRA, and now the Social Security Bill. They contended that Negroes, as marginal workers, had been the first to lose their jobs under the NRA, and that they had also been under differential wage scales as a result of the codes. Too, as tenants, Negroes had lost their livelihood as a result of government restrictions under AAA and had rarely received allotment checks from that agency.⁷⁰

As New Deal injustices mounted, Hoover became more sensitive to the need of positive leadership. The former President returned to the political stump. Speaking at Grass Valley, California, on July 4, he warned that a "crisis of liberty" was at hand and that "America had today a transcendent mission to civilization, far beyond our own safety. It is our high duty to hold bright the light of individual liberty."⁷¹

Hoover's pique at his party's failure to defend

⁷⁰Editorial, "Social Security--for White Folk," Crisis, XLII (March, 1935), 80; George E. Haynes, "Lily-White Social Security," Crisis, XLII (March, 1935), 85-86. For an early denunciation of NRA, see John P. Davis, "What Price National Recovery?" Crisis, XL (December, 1933), 271-272. Also see John P. Davis, "A Black Inventory of the New Deal," Crisis, XLII (May, 1935), 141-142, for charges of racial discrimination in NRA, AAA, and PWA. See Roos, NRA, for a fuller treatment of this problem.

⁷¹Hoover Collection, LXIV (July 4, 1935), Item 2209. Congressman Hilderbrandt blasted Hoover's statements on Liberty as "ludicrous" and as an apology for exploiters of the working class. Cong. Rec., 74 Cong. 1 Sess (May 10, 1935), 7318.

principle accelerated at much the same rate as speculation on the 1936 presidential race. For several months, Knox remained the front runner. Despite Hurley's assurance that the former President had "absolutely no wish to return to public office," Old Guard leaders as well as their progressive counterparts remained uneasy at Hoover's refusal to disavow his own possible candidacy.⁷²

Concerning the various rumors of Hoover's unavailability, his disinterest, his endorsement of Knox, and his alleged intention of publicly announcing his decision to seek no more public offices, a disturbed Hyde wrote: "Please do not let them drive you far enough to say you would not accept if drafted." And "don't slam the door against the rise of a sentiment which may yet come."⁷³ New Hampshire's George Moses,⁷⁴ Colonel Creager,⁷⁵ and Henry R. Adams, a California Republican, equally upset with recent rumors,

⁷²Hurley to Hoover, July 1, 1935, K-60.

⁷³Hyde to Hoover, July 1, 1935, K-61. The Missourian reported that many of his friends and acquaintances thought that H.H. was the most experienced and able leader in the GOP but that they doubted his availability or his election chances. However, such reasoning, to Hyde, did not "prevent the growth of a positive pro-Hoover sentiment" in the near future. Fearing a disavowal statement from his Chief, Hyde urged caution, moderation, and the maintenance of an open door.

⁷⁴Moses to Hoover, July 2, 1935, K-95, also encouraged further Hoover-Knox negotiations.

⁷⁵Creager to Hoover, July 8, 1935, K-25. Creager pointed to the political advantages of remaining silent and urged H.H. to consolidate his "influence in the party and in the next national convention."

wrote Hoover to abstain from any public disavowal.⁷⁶

Chicago lawyer Nathan W. MacChesney, a Hooverite but one outside the inner circle, hoped that the ex-President would maintain his noncommittal attitude on a possible candidacy. Having heard businessmen discuss Hoover's ability and the fact that he was the "logical candidate," MacChesney thought that he saw a drift in Hoover's direction.⁷⁷ After a trip to the west coast,⁷⁸ the Chicagoan announced that critical times might force a draft-Hoover move since the ex-President remained "the strongest single candidate" for office.⁷⁹ A rank and file Republican, John Broom, endorsed the MacChesney statement and called on Hoover to expose the "Raw Deal."⁸⁰

In the month of July there were a myriad of mistakes. The Kansas City Star reported, in an authoritative tone, that Hoover privately had given Knox his blessing. Arthur Hyde attempted to force a retraction by editor Roy Roberts

⁷⁶Adams to Hoover, July 20, 1935, K-1. Adams predicted that the nation would again call on Hoover for leadership.

⁷⁷MacChesney to Richey, July 5, 1935, K-86.

⁷⁸Ibid. "I am leaving for California tomorrow night where I plan to see Mr. Hoover and talk things over with him."

⁷⁹Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1935, 1.

⁸⁰Broom to Hoover, July 8, and November 19, 1935, K-15.

but left the waters even more muddied.⁸¹ Henry Fletcher allowed or encouraged the National Committee to circulate copies of Post articles which placed the ex-President in a bad light.⁸² Hoover was so incensed that he considered publicly demanding a change in the chairmanship.⁸³ Spangler, equally irritated with Fletcher's conduct, admitted that the Chairman should spend even more time "at the golf course in Greencastle" but thought a public breach was unwise since many of their opponents would accuse Spangler of desiring the party post.⁸⁴ The Spangler note tempered Hoover's anger. In fact, when Ogden Mills wrote the Chief demanding a shake-up in national headquarters, Hoover calmly replied that the time was wrong. He did promise, however, to work for reorganization in the future. Hoover also concluded that Fletcher was "now only a dummy for Hamilton" who was under the wing of the Chicago group.⁸⁵

The former President remained uneasy at the efforts

⁸¹Hyde to Hoover, July 4, 1935, K-61. The Star promoted the Landon candidacy. Roy Roberts became the Governor's publicity agent. See James W. Davis, Presidential Primaries: Road to the White House (New York, 1967), 180; Herbert Eaton, Presidential Timber (London, 1964), 363; and McCoy, "Landon and the Campaign of 1936," 197, 198, 202. McCoy says that H.H. "could not be considered out of contention." Hence, the article was probably a deliberate effort to discern H.H.'s actual intentions.

⁸²Hoover to Spangler, July 15, 1935, K-127.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Spangler to Hoover, July 18, 1935, K-127.

⁸⁵Mills to Hoover, July 22, 1935, and Hoover to Mills, July 30, 1935, K-92.

to deprive his friends of influence within the party hierarchy.⁸⁶ Hoover and some of his advisers continued to press the Party for a defense of his administration and for a popularization of his depression-recovery theory. They reasoned that the depression could not be avoided as a campaign issue and that an aggressive attack was the best means to minimize its effect.⁸⁷

In spite of Roosevelt's novel experiments, the economy remained on a low key. The processing tax stifled the textile industry in Rhode Island and undoubtedly affected election results in the small New England state. The August returns were so surprising that several Eastern newspapers predicted that FDR would be a one-term President.⁸⁸

Throughout the nation, consumers' prices soared. Inflation was reflected in the astronomical rise in food stuffs, and especially in meat prices. As living costs and taxes spiraled upward, there was increasing talk of Consumers' Leagues as a means to protest government policy.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Hoover to Spangler, July 24, 1935, K-127.

⁸⁷Hoover to Ashmun Brown, July 25, 1935, K-15.

⁸⁸A. Brown to Hoover, August 12, 1935, K-15. New York Times, August 7, 1935, New York Herald Tribune, August 7, 1935, Worcester Telegram, August 7, 1935, and Providence Journal, August 9, 1935, with their editorials on the election, are included in the Brown to Hoover letter of August 12, 1935.

⁸⁹Ibid.; Henry J. Allen to Hoover, September 6, 1935, K-2.

On August 11, Hoover released a public statement indicting the Administration's efforts to alter the Constitution. He warned of the destruction of the "balance of powers." He argued that Congress had surrendered its checks on executive authority, that the federal government had violated states rights, that bureaucracy had become a leviathan, and that constitutional revision was being promoted in an effort to alter the Supreme Court's challenge to the concentration of power in the hands of the executive.⁹⁰ Alabama's national committeeman, Oliver Street, wrote the former President that he alone among national leaders had pointed to "the supreme issue"--concentrated power. The lawyer urged Hoover to wage "an aggressive war on Roosevelt."⁹¹

As Hoover-oriented Republicans continued to push for a platform of principles,⁹² Spangler convinced Fletcher to call a September meeting of the Executive Committee. The GOP Chairman also agreed to cooperate with the Grass Roots movement in the Midwest and designated Spangler, Hamilton, and Indiana's George Ball to head the Chicago organization.⁹³

⁹⁰Hoover Collection, LXIV (August 11, 1935), Item 2211. New York Times, August 12, 1935, 1. Also see Mills, What of Tomorrow? 7-10, for a denunciation of the suspension of the constitution and unlimited executive power.

⁹¹Street to Hoover, August 12, 1935, K-132.

⁹²Henry Adams to Hoover, August 7, 1935, K-1; Spangler to Hoover, August 20, 1935, K-127.

⁹³Ibid.

Throughout the summer of 1935, the Knox presidential bandwagon gained steam. The Bull Mooser made inroads in New Jersey,⁹⁴ Iowa,⁹⁵ North Dakota,⁹⁶ and Georgia.⁹⁷ Delegates, friendly to the former President, assumed that Knox had Hoover's blessing.⁹⁸ When Knox came within one vote of Senator Lester Dickinson in Iowa, the GOP Senator's balloon burst.⁹⁹ Senator Borah's drive also stalled.¹⁰⁰ Senator Arthur Vandenberg, waiting in the wings, needed the endorsement of the Western Progressives if he was to become a serious candidate.¹⁰¹

Republican National Committeeman Mark Requa of California conferred with Earl Warren, the state Attorney General, and informed his Chief that California laws negated any possibility of running uninstructed delegates for the national convention as a group. Each delegate, by state law, must be

⁹⁴Fort to Hoover, July 27, 1935, K-39.

⁹⁵Knox to MacNider, August 23, 1935, Series 5, Box 73, Hanford MacNider Papers.

⁹⁶Ibid., August 30, 1935.

⁹⁷H. H. Turner to Hoover, September 9, 1935, K-16.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Knox to MacNider, August 23, 1935, Series 5, Box 73, Hanford MacNider Papers.

¹⁰⁰Walter Myers to Hoover, August 20, 1935, K-97.

¹⁰¹Fort to Hoover, July 27, 1935, K-39. Fort disclosed the attractiveness of Vandenberg to Washington leaders and the "old Regular crowd," many of whom thought that H.H. was unavailable.

elected individually.¹⁰² New Yorker Alan Fox, persistently pressing his Chief towards an active candidacy, conferred with Oklahoma Republicans and learned of a surprising rank-and-file receptivity for the former President. Although the majority of pro-Hoover men believed that he was unavailable, and although Fox admitted that his Chief could not openly seek the nomination, the New Yorker thought that Hooverites could encourage a public demand for the ex-President.¹⁰³ Larry Richey, Hoover's alter-ego, encouraged Fox and other friends of the Chief "to do whatever you can."¹⁰⁴

When rumors spread concerning a break in the Hoover inner circle, Lewis Strauss, a confidant of the Chief, conferred with Mills. Strauss soon denied "the defeatest attitude attributed to" the disciple and said that Mills continued to see Hoover as the antithesis to the New Deal.¹⁰⁵

As the September meeting of the executive Committee approached, Spangler reminded his Chief of its importance

¹⁰²Requa to Hoover, August 12, 1935, K-108. The motive for this inquiry remains uncertain. Knox, the closest candidate to H.H.'s ideas, was the frontrunner. Only later did Landon emerge as the man to beat. Perhaps H.H. was reconsidering his own position as a non-candidate.

¹⁰³Fox to Richey, August 27, 1935, K-39.

¹⁰⁴Richey to Fox, September 11, 1935, K-39.

¹⁰⁵Strauss to Hoover, September 17, 1935, K-130. Strauss conceded that Mills' conversation might have been "tempered by knowledge" of Strauss' own sympathies.

and the need to mobilize all Hooverites.¹⁰⁶ The former President urged Franklin Fort to push for a publicity drive by the organization and a delegation of more power to Spangler and the Midwestern group. Hoover also wanted a direct appeal to the youth of the nation and an acceleration of efforts at the local level.¹⁰⁷

Hooverites such as Earl Warren remained agitated at the expanding federal bureaucracy, the regimentation of Americans "into a socialistic state, and the [centralization of] all power in Washington."¹⁰⁸ Consequently the need for positive alternatives accelerated. Fort decided to send up "a trial balloon" in an effort to prove the need for a stronger platform on principles.¹⁰⁹

For his part, Hoover made a Constitution Day Address at San Diego, California, on September 17. He spoke on "The Bill of Rights." Hoover accused alien philosophies popular in Europe with creating "a new slavery" in their violations of individual rights and their distortions of the role of government. To him, the Bill of Rights were as clear as the Ten Commandments. Moreover, "behind them is the conception

¹⁰⁶Spangler to Hoover, September 10, 1935, K-127.

¹⁰⁷Hoover to Fort, September 14, 1935, K-39.

¹⁰⁸Warren to Hoover, September 18, 1935, K-145. Warren damned federal regulation of business and agriculture. He thought that it was incredible that farmers could be imprisoned for raising more than five bushels of potatoes without a federal permit.

¹⁰⁹Fort to Hoover, September 18, 1935, K-39.

which is the highest development of the Christian faith: the conception of individual freedom with brotherhood." To Hoover, the new panaceas lacked virtue, reason, or legality. He said, "Liberty is safe only by a division of powers and [through] local self-government."¹¹⁰

Following the National Executive Committee meeting, Walter Brown sent a full report to his Chief. As anticipated, Spangler had been named to chair Western activities. The Iowan promised to promote Young Republican Clubs and Leagues across the country. GOP finances were improving. There was an increasing optimism regarding a platform of principles.¹¹¹

Throughout 1935, Hoover made "what he regarded as authoritative definitions of party doctrine."¹¹² At times he worked through the National Committee. More often he stumped the country. As an orator, he was ineffective, "for he read his uninspired speeches monotonously, rarely lifting his eyes from the manuscript."¹¹³ Yet, his oratorical

¹¹⁰Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 58-62. New York Times, September 18, 1935. See Cong. Rec., 74 Cong. 1 Sess. (August 12, 1935), 12872.

¹¹¹W. Brown to Hoover, September 26, 1935, K-16; Spangler to Hoover, September 30, 1935, K-127. Brown's resolution on behalf of Spangler was unanimously endorsed. Hooverites were in the saddle as far as the Executive Committee was concerned.

¹¹²Mayer, The Republicans, 436.

¹¹³George Creel, Rebel At Large (New York, 1947), 266. Creel also noted H.H.'s improvement as an orator after his presidency. By the mid-1930's, H.H. looked at his audience,

efforts were improving. Even his phraseology reflected a variation. There was increasing talk, even some articles, concerning the "new" Hoover--mellow, pungent, and human.¹¹⁴ Correspondents were amazed at the buoyancy, optimism, and camaraderie of the oppositionist leader. His biting sarcasm and analytical "brilliance" sparkled in his Oakland address.¹¹⁵

Speaking to the California Republican Assembly on October 5, 1935, the ex-President focused on "Spending, Deficits, Debts and Their Consequences." In his plea for a return of common sense, Hoover said, "The issue of America is not a battle of phrases, but a battle between straight and crooked thinking." He denounced a "policy of deliberate spending," an unbalanced budget, and increasing debts. He lamented the fiscal maneuvers of the Administration and warned that generations upon generations would have to pay

chose his words, and elucidated many problems. Also see Guerrant, Comparisons and Contrasts, for a critical evaluation of H.H.'s speaking liabilities.

¹¹⁴Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 526-527. "New Hoover Challenges New Deal," Literary Digest, CXX (October 12, 1935), 8.

¹¹⁵Ibid. Also see "GOPossibilities," Time, XXVI (October 14, 1935), 15-16. Time noted a "new," vigorous H.H. and spoke of him as the "only national figure" in the GOP. "Hoover: Ex-President's Attack Shows New Vim, Vigor, Humor," News-Week, VI (October 12, 1935), 12, credited Ben S. Allen, an Associated Press correspondent, with influencing H.H.'s new style.

for present mistakes.¹¹⁶ He noted that the national debt was rising some three and a half billion dollars a year and that the only way to recovery was through a sound fiscal program such as that which his own administration had pursued. He called on the public to end "the most gigantic spoils raid in our history."¹¹⁷

Despite its unprecedented power, the New Deal, in Hoover's mind, had failed in area upon area. He pointed to the unemployment figures which had remained within half a million of the 1932 totals, to budget deficits, to inflation, to the repudiation of debts, to the rise in consumers' prices, and to the declining living standards as evidence of a "mistaken" policy. To him, retrenchment, in a "sound fiscal policy," was the answer. Hoover called for a restoration of liberty and admitted that the road ahead was rough but that it was the only way. He concluded: "We cannot spend ourselves into a real prosperity. That is joyriding to bankruptcy." He predicted that the election of 1936 would be the most important of the century.¹¹⁸

Hoover was repeating the indictments that he had made

¹¹⁶Ibid.; New York Times, October 6, 1935, 1; Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 63-65. Also see Mills, What of Tomorrow? 47-64, 76, for a similar concern over spending, deficits, and debts. James P. Warburg, Hell Bent For Election (Garden City, 1935), 9, 14, 17, 25-27, is extremely critical of FDR's economic policy.

¹¹⁷Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 65-67.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 68-73.

in Challenge to Liberty. Although his content remained soaked with words such as regimentation, centralization, balanced budgets, individualism, and liberty, he showed "surprising flashes, even grim humor." Above all, a crusading fervor radiated his fierce determination to awaken the country to its spiritual decline. At times he achieved eloquence in invoking an older America of individual enterprise and individual responsibility.¹¹⁹ Hoover's spiritual motif was constantly reflected in his correspondence. Of a rank-and-file admirer, he said: "Here is another disciple."¹²⁰

As October drew to a close, various Republicans sought Hoover's advice on the forthcoming campaign.¹²¹ Sol Levinson, the financeer, a Borah booster, worked for a reconciliation between the "Lion of Idaho" and the former President. At the least, he hoped to elicit Hoover's promise to support Borah should the Senator gain the Republican nomination in 1936.¹²²

¹¹⁹Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 526-527.

¹²⁰Hoover to Shaw, October 19, 1935, K-119. H.H. commented on the laudatory letter from Colonel Charles R. Gow which endorsed H.H.'s ideas.

¹²¹Styles Bridges to Hoover, October 30, 1935, K-15. The rising young New Hampshire Republican, a Hoover admirer, said that his state would send an uninstructed delegation to the 1936 convention but assured H.H. that Knox, as a "native son," would enjoy solid support.

¹²²Richey to Hoover, November 21, 1935, K-14, belatedly reported Levinson advances. Borah was emphasizing the

Although Hoover ignored the Borah overtures, he sent Richey a memo of contentions that he wished Borah had the sense to recognize. The list cited the need for the GOP to unite against the New Deal rather than commit self-destruction; to realize that Hoover had "no organization seeking delegates" and had "refused to allow anything of the kind"; that the Old Guard and Hoover were antagonists; that Borah and Hoover had many similar views; that both "should keep an open mind that [would] enable them to use their influence to secure some proper man and a proper set-up of Republican principles"; that Hoover was not opposed to a Borah candidacy; and that Borah should give the country assurance that he would not bolt the GOP in 1936, regardless of the candidate.¹²³ It is likely that Richey passed this information on to Levinson. It is equally doubtful that Borah accepted the validity of the Hoover pronouncements.

Hoover's burst of activity and his numerous trips across the country fanned speculation that he was indeed a candidate for the 1936 presidential nomination. Consequently, Arthur Sears Henning of the Los Angeles Times obtained an interview with the former President. According to Henning,

ideas he shared with H.H. concerning distaste for the Old Guard and the New Deal. Borah led the October public opinion polls with forty-two per cent, more than Landon and H.H. combined. These three men remained at the top of the polls from October, 1935 to May 1, 1936. Hadley Cantril (ed.), Public Opinion, 1935-1946 (Princeton, 1951), 590-597. Also see McKenna, Borah, 315, 322-326.

¹²³Hoover memo, 1935, Borah folder, K-14.

Hoover was not actively seeking the nomination and was very conscious of his depression image and the "disastrous defeat" of 1932. The ex-President was dedicated to exposing the defects of the New Deal and, according to Henning, was simply sounding the trumpet for the loyal opposition. Hoover, he said, wanted a change, regardless of who led it.¹²⁴

In a press statement of November 11, 1935, Hoover reasserted that his only objective was the defeat of FDR and the restoration of principles. He thought that "the first duty of the Republican Party is a just and frank debate of the New Deal." Speaking of the various failures of New Deal policies, he predicted the desertion of millions of Democrats to the Republican ticket in 1936.¹²⁵

On November 16, Hoover, in New York City, spoke on "The Consequences of 'Economic Planning' and Some Remedies For It." Although he realized that if he "were simply to read the Ten Commandments it would be interpreted as critical by the Administration," he wanted to point up the "planned extravagance" which was prevalent. "The starry-eyed young

¹²⁴Arthur Sears Henning, "Menaces of New Deal Hoover's Chief Concern," Los Angeles Times, November 9, 1935. Henning did admit that H.H. would accept another nomination in the event the convention turned to him.

¹²⁵Hoover Collection, LXIV (November 11, 1935), Item 2230, includes articles speculating on Hoover's possible candidacy. The newspapers included were the Chicago Daily News, November 11, 1935, Washington Post, October 7, 1935, New York Times, November 8, 1935, Palo Alto Times, August 24, and October 10, 1935, and a clipping from News-Week, November 23, 1935.

men in Washington," he charged, were impoverishing the nation. He doubted that any amount of rhetoric could conceal their passion for power.¹²⁶

Hoover used the departure and disillusionment of numerous "brain-trusters," government officials, and even cabinet members as "proof" of the inadequacy of New Deal planning. He concluded that the nation was rapidly progressing toward the end with its alphabetical agencies. Sarcastically, he said, "but of course the New Russian alphabet has thirty-four letters."¹²⁷

In a biting manner, Hoover blasted the "carefree scattering of public money" as exhibited in the budget, the increasing debt, and the relief roles. To him, economic planning was limiting competition, restricting production, concentrating power in Washington, abetting monopoly, and creating a "planned scarcity." He said that the New Deal was repeating past mistakes. To him, history had long proven the lack of wisdom in fiscal irresponsibility and the hampering of individual freedom.¹²⁸ Perhaps the worst aspect

¹²⁶Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 75-76. Hoover Collection, LXIV (November 16, 1935), Item 2231. New York Times, November 17, 1935, 1. Also see "Politics: Hoover Rounds Up His Forces and Looks To His Fences," Newsweek, VI (November 23, 1935), 12.

¹²⁷Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 77-79. In his sarcasm, H.H. suggested that New Dealers, in order to exhaust the American alphabet, might establish a Quick Loans Corporation for Xylophones, Yachts, and Zithers.

¹²⁸Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 81-85.

of the "planned economy," he said, was its cost to farmers, workers, and businessmen who would pay the price far into the future. He called for an end to "planned extravagance." He concluded that the time had arrived for "plain speaking." America must face the facts.¹²⁹

Following Hoover's New York address, Justice Stone praised his Chief's sound, courageous, constructive effort to point up the fallacies in the economic policies of the New Deal. Stone lamented America's loss of markets as a result of artificial restrictions on production. He reasoned that the public would be shocked when it learned the complete truth about the spreading bureaucracy.¹³⁰ Encouraged by Stone's candor, Hoover promised to continue hammering at principles. He said, "I have no other interest than to see that the issues are put before the country. . . . As you seemed to like the last book in this so far compiled Bible, I send you a copy of it."¹³¹

The "hermit of Palo Alto" crossed the Rockies fourteen times between 1933 and 1935.¹³² His efforts, coupled with the Republican's November showing throughout the East, buoyed

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Stone to Hoover, private, November 19, 1935, K-130.

¹³¹H.H.'s belief in the sacredness of his message is unmistakable in this letter. Hoover to Stone, November 27, 1935, K-130.

¹³²"Hoover's New Deal 'Remedies,'" Literary Digest, CXX (November 23, 1935), 5.

party hopes.¹³³ Even Ogden Mills regained a certain optimism concerning the 1936 election. The New Yorker, however, became increasingly uncomfortable in Hooverian circles where he felt "self-accusations of disloyalty" from his statement that Governor Landon was "an outstanding contender."¹³⁴

Walter Brown, recovering from a protracted illness, resumed working with the Chief in late November. Brown urged Hoover to time his next speech so as to anticipate the National Committee meeting. This, he reasoned, would boost party morale.¹³⁵

As the date for the conclave approached, Creager and Hoover discussed the possible sites for the 1936 Convention, its timing, and other matters. The Texan was most concerned with capitalizing on Democratic discord. Thus, he favored a late time, in order to benefit from any divisions which developed at the Democratic Convention, and an alliance with Constitutional Democrats, to be gained by nominating someone

¹³³O 'Laughlin to Hoover, November 9, 1935, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. New York Times, November 8-9, 1935, 1.

¹³⁴Strauss to Hoover, November 27, 1935, K-130. Whatever H.H.'s intentions were, "a coterie of personal supporters preferred another catastrophe at the polls to the abandonment of the ex-President." Mayer, The Republicans, 436. Strauss, ever loyal to H.H., probably encouraged Mills' feeling of disloyalty. Strauss to Hoover, November 27, 1935, K-130.

¹³⁵Brown to Hoover, November 20, 1935, K-16. Brown to Richey, telephone conversation, November 29, 1935, K-16, urged a speech on agriculture. He also disclosed Ted Joslin's endorsement of Landon.

like Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia for the second spot on the ticket. The ex-President emphasized the desirability of choosing St. Louis or Cleveland as the site because of the Midwestern flavor. He admitted that St. Louis might attract more dissident Democrats.¹³⁶

Speaking at the John Marshall Republican Club in St. Louis, December 16, 1935, Hoover concentrated on "the Bank Panic and Relief Administration Reform." Concerning FDR's recent defense of his economic policy, Hoover said: "You will not be astonished if we do not agree. . . . In its larger dimensions this irrepressible conflict is between the American system of liberty and New Deal collectivism." Hoover denied that "the mechanics of civilization," as Roosevelt had put it, "came to a dead stop on March 3, 1933." To Hoover, such a partisan statement was without foundation.¹³⁷

At St. Louis, Hoover presented his pet thesis that his administration had checked the depression in the summer of 1932, that recovery had begun, and that only the election with its uncertainties had halted the upswing. Concerning the "so-called collapse of the banking system," ninety-two per cent of the banks were proven sound even by Roosevelt's own admission. To Hoover, it was the New Deal which had led

¹³⁶Creager to Hoover, December 2, 1935, and Hoover to Creager, December 10, 1935, K-25.

¹³⁷Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 87-88.

to a "breakdown in confidence."¹³⁸

The former President was incensed at efforts to smear him as inhumane. Had the public forgotten his experience as a relief worker and Food Administrator? He recalled that he had seen far too much human suffering, hunger, and despair. He had witnessed more than his share of wars, floods, and famines. To Hoover, however, relief was an emergency operation, "not a social experiment." He saw the New Deal as "more red tape than relief." He castigated visionaries and politicians for claiming that the people had suffered in silence until the New Deal came along and solved all their problems. In reality, he said, the panacea had broken people's spirits.¹³⁹

Hoover, warming to the attack, quoted the Democratic mayor of Pittsburgh as charging the New Deal with creating "a blood clot in the arteries of industry." For his part, Hoover urged a re-establishment of checks and balances, and of the division of power. He noted that the public must "learn that there are other things moving around in the dark besides Santa Claus."¹⁴⁰

Following Hoover's St. Louis speech, Creager, who had

¹³⁸Ibid., 89-92. Also see "Who But Hoover?" New Republic, LXXXV (December 4, 1935), 92-95, for a discussion of the Hoover depression theory. The article concluded that it was human to excuse his failure but wrong to deny it.

¹³⁹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 92-95.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 96-99.

listened to it with Spangler, Brown, Requa, and other members of the inner circle, wired the former President: "most effective speech we have ever heard. . . . A great service to the party."¹⁴¹ More and more Republicans were seeing Hoover as the logical candidate. To them, he was the intelligent, courageous, uncompromising leader who could offer alternatives to the New Deal. Fort urged an aggressive campaign for principle. He said that Hoover, as the "ablest Republican," was leading an upswing in party morale.¹⁴²

Yet, there were other candidacies. Mills, perturbed at his Chief's refusal to publicly disavow any candidacy, was moving toward the Landon camp.¹⁴³ The Borah menace was aiding the "favorite-son" candidacy of the Kansas Governor.¹⁴⁴ David Hinshaw, a Hoover biographer, endorsed Landon because of his political resemblance to Grover

¹⁴¹Creager to Hoover, telegram, December 16, 1935, K-25.

¹⁴²John Spargo, "Republicans must Choose," Review of Reviews, XCII (December, 1935), 22-26. O'Laughlin to Hoover, November 30, 1935, K-101, thought H.H. was "the one Republican voice to which attention will be paid." Fort to Hoover, December 28, 1935, K-39, reported the favorable comment on the Chief's St. Louis speech. The San-Mateo-Burlingame Advance Star, December 30, 1935, noted H.H.'s popularity with rank and file Republicans but concluded that he was "too intellectual to suit a nation accustomed to ballyhoo," D-245. Wolfe, Hoover, 366, noted that if the GOP chose the Hoover strategy, he would become the obvious candidate for 1936.

¹⁴³Hoover to W. Brown, December 10, 1935, K-16, regretted Mills' pique but felt that a public disavowal would look foolish.

¹⁴⁴Fort to Hoover, December 18, 1935, K-39.

Cleveland.¹⁴⁵ Other conservatives were promoting a Dickinson boomlet in Ohio.¹⁴⁶

As political speculation mounted, the Hoover lieutenants began shifting and reporting attitudes toward another Hoover nomination. Although the Ohio Central Committee voiced no enthusiasm for another Hoover try, Brown hoped to gain a favorite son delegation "to keep the lid on." Brown had gained the cooperation of Hilles in designating Cleveland as the next convention site. Relations with Eastern leaders had rarely been so cordial.¹⁴⁷ Alan Fox reported "some headway" as delegates showed an increasing warmth to the idea of a Hoover candidacy.¹⁴⁸ Frank Fort was all but cleared as a convention delegate, and his loyalty was well known.¹⁴⁹

At the time of his St. Louis speech, Hoover had refused to commit himself on the question of a possible candidacy. He had reaffirmed his interest in issues. He even stated,

¹⁴⁵Hinshaw to Harold Johnson, December 19, 1935, K-74.

¹⁴⁶Brown to Hoover, December 6, 1935, K-16.

¹⁴⁷Brown to Hoover, December 6, and December 18, 1935, K-16. In the last letter, Brown, having recently attended the National Committee meeting, reported the friendly attitude of Hilles and Pomeroy.

¹⁴⁸Fox to Richey, December 19, 1935, K-39.

¹⁴⁹Fort to Hoover, December 28, 1935, K-39.

"I have no interest in picking a candidate."¹⁵⁰ Actually, he was very interested in the speculation about possible candidates. At the least, he wanted a nominee who would defend Hoover policies and ideas. At his request, Hyde performed a reconnaissance on Governor Landon and his political views.¹⁵¹

As the year closed, the 1936 election became the leading topic of conversation in every gathering of Republicans. Regardless of his attitude toward the former President, no aspirant or delegate could ignore the shadow of the former leader. If Hoover was politically dead, and many Republicans expressed such a belief, why did his staunchest antagonists devote so much attention to his alleged unavailability? The time for decision, both for the ex-President and his Party, was fast approaching.

¹⁵⁰Hoover Collection, LXIV (December 16, 1935), Item 2240. New York Times, December 17, 1935, 1.

¹⁵¹Hyde to Hoover, December 19, 1935, K-61.

CHAPTER VI

YEAR OF DECISION

Rexford Tugwell, a "brains-truster," once theorized that "the politician of any age is an individual motivated to influence others, particularly in the direction of support for himself, and secondarily in support of the causes with which he chooses to identify himself."¹ Although Hoover placed his ideas ahead of his ambitions, it was obvious that an endorsement of Hooverian principles would make him the logical candidate for 1936. At all costs, he was determined to witness the repudiation of the New Deal.

Throughout 1936, the ex-President released an increasing number of press statements. In a devastating rebuke of the President's message to Congress, Hoover charged Roosevelt with moving "the date of creation . . . to March 4, 1933." To New Dealers, until the inauguration "the world was without form and void." Hoover charged that no mortal man had ever exercised such extraordinary powers as FDR. The former President called for retrenchment from such authority.²

¹Rexford G. Tugwell, The Art of Politics (Garden City, 1958), 214.

²Hoover Collection, LXIVA (January 5, 1936), Item 2251. New York Times, January 6, 1936, 1.

On January 7, Hoover lauded the Supreme Court's invalidation of the AAA as a great judicial decision. Hooverites, equally elated at the Court's verdict, thought that the ex-President's sagacity again had been proven.³

On January 16, Hoover spoke at Lincoln, Nebraska, on "Further Explorations of the New Deal--Including Agricultural Policies." Hoover accused the Administration of driving farmers into the ditch. He thought that New Dealers had failed on their promised utopia and then had denounced anyone who criticized them. To him, Agriculture, as a national problem, affected labor and capital. Wasn't the farmer paying direct and hidden taxes? Weren't the wasteful spending and unbalanced budgets of the federal government bleeding all agrarians? To Hoover, an "economy of scarcity" based on controlled production was boosting prices, but inflation, drought, and world recovery would have achieved as much.⁴

Hoover thought that the best profits came from uncontrolled commodities. Of course, he said, there was no surplus of such produce. To him, this was the point. He proposed a "conservation-based policy for agriculture" which would provide subsidies for new crops as an incentive and

³Hoover Collection, LXIVA (January 7, 1936), Item 2252. Ted Joslin to Hoover, January 6, 1936, K-66.

⁴Hoover Collection, LXIVA (January 16, 1936), Item 2254. Hoover, Addresses On The Road, 101-106. "Freedom For the Farm," Vital Speeches, II, January 27, 1936, 271-275.

positive answer to farm problems.⁵

The former President blasted the "processing tax" which hurt the working classes; bemoaned the Administration's manufacturing sales tax with its twenty-five per cent allotment on pork, and its thirty per cent tab on flour, both of which robbed the poor; and reaffirmed his loyalty to his own 1933 two-and-a-half per cent sales tax proposal which would have exempted food and cheaper clothing.⁶

He lamented America's loss of markets due to a forced scarcity. He cited numerous examples of America's declining exports. To him, New Deal coercion, ineffectiveness, contradiction, and waste had lowered the purchasing power of the farmer's dollar to a new nadir. The time, he said, had arrived for a reversal in the collectivization drive. The farmer's freedom must be restored.⁷

Hoover was pleased at the reception of his Nebraska speech. It "was deliberately critical of the AAA program."⁸

⁵Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 106-108, 111. Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, II, 683. H.H.'s new agricultural position, embodying so much of Lowden's 1929 proposal, led to speculation that the Illinois Governor had converted H.H. to his views.

⁶Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 103, 107.

⁷Ibid., 104, 107-113.

⁸Hoover to Creager, January 19, 1936, K-25. A. Brown to Hoover, January 17, 1936, K-15, said that members of the press were praising the elevated plane of the Nebraska speech. Brown enclosed the laudatory editorials of several newspapers. L. W. Ainsworth to Hoover, K-1, January 27, 1936, reported an enthusiastic approval in Iowa. Farmers, he said, resented restriction which made food imports necessary.

The danger was that farmers had gained "a taste for direct subsidy."⁹ He feared that the "whole situation was changing rapidly" and that its complexity was becoming unmanageable.¹⁰ Samuel Crowther, preparing a book on the AAA, hoped that the attacks on FDR's "ludicrous" farm policy would "blow the Administration out of the water."¹¹ Other Hooverites were equally pleased at the ex-President's agricultural analysis.¹²

Hoover's desire for GOP leadership dramatically surfaced in his Nebraska effort. He used sarcasm and ridicule to a new degree in an effort to evoke debate.¹³ He spoke of the 1930's as "the most critical period in United States history, since the Civil War."¹⁴ In subsequent speeches, he

⁹Fess to Hoover, January 16, and February 1, 1936, K-36. Fess lauded the speech and H.H.'s proposal of a subsidy for new crops. He warned that the Democrats would deliberately pretend to misunderstand H.H.'s positive solution.

¹⁰Hoover to Fess, January 19, 1936, K-36.

¹¹Crowther to Hoover, January 18, 1936, K-25. Crowther was working with George Peek on a book extremely critical of FDR's agricultural policy.

¹²Justice Harlan Stone to Hoover, January 22, 1936, K-130, lauded the AAA speech and urged publication of "the unfortunate effect of the curtailment of production on the home market." Joslin to Hoover, January 18, K-66. Hyde to Hoover, January 25, 1936, K-61, although concerned with agriculture, was obsessed by the alarming permeation of the church by Communist leaders. He feared that many preachers were accepting Communist doctrine.

¹³Wolfe, Hoover, 367.

¹⁴Hoover Collection, LXIVA (January 17, 1936), Item 2256, 2258, and 2262.

frequently used such phrases as "creeping collectivism," "dictated economy," "fascist tyranny," "nullification of liberty," and the need for "equal justice." Such phrases, however exaggerated, were clever political weapons. These "weighted words" evoked strong emotions. Any political speaker worth his salt employs the common currency of debate in order to persuade.¹⁵ By 1936, Hoover, however belatedly, recognized the irrationality in modern psychology. In this sense he was a "new" Hoover.

Alan Fox, impressed by Hoover's speeches, and convinced that the politicians feared his Chief's candidacy because they knew that he was the "best vote-getter," began promoting talk of the former President in New York.¹⁶ Hoover remained non-committal but told Fox that the speeches were directed at forcing "the candidates into the open" where Hooverites could "form a better judgment as to their qualification."¹⁷ The New Yorker, remembering that "we" had considered Dickinson potential presidential material, concluded that the senator had stressed some "good old points" but lacked "originality of thought or expression." Fox

¹⁵Herring, Politics of Democracy, 251-252.

¹⁶Fox to Hoover, January 18, 1936, K-39.

¹⁷Hoover to Fox, January 24, 1936, K-39. Since Fox was an intimate and trusted lieutenant, H.H.'s letter implied that he was still looking for a Hooverian candidate. Admittedly, he did not reprimand Fox's aggressive activity, but H.H., at the least, wanted friendly delegates who might defer to his advice.

believed that the time had come to test public sentiment for Hoover through the use of opinion polls.¹⁸

When, in January, the Landon organization kicked out William Allen White, the colorful editor had second thoughts about Landon's capability for the presidency. Hoover, pursuing a dual policy, urged White to promote the election of uninstructed delegations from the Midwestern states at the same time that he wrote Landon advising him to disavow all Hearst connections if he was a serious candidate.¹⁹

Despite his own setbacks, the irrepressible Alan Fox continued to promote a Hoover candidacy. He urged some concessions to lukewarm factions, demanded an exposure of Landon's obvious mediocrity, and pushed for a public poll which would prove Hoover's popularity with rank and file Republicans.²⁰ His Chief, remaining calm, analyzed the situation thusly, "The main trouble with our army is that we have a great number of privates and officers but as yet no general has emerged."²¹

¹⁸Fox to Hoover, January 30, 1936, K-39. Fox, recently defeated in his efforts to be named a delegate to the 1936 convention, contended that his defeat had nothing to do with his devotion to the Chief. The argument is extremely dubious. Harold Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (New York, 1953), 548, reported rumors that H.H. had stopped the Landon express and was leaning toward Dickinson.

¹⁹Hoover to Hyde, January 27, 1936, K-61.

²⁰Fox to Hoover, February 4, and February 6, 1936, K-39. Fox was disturbed at the artificial Landon boom.

²¹Hoover to Fox, February, 1936, K-39. Again H.H. seems to be looking for an Hooverian candidate.

Nathan MacChesney, an old Hooverite, served as an intermediary between the Knox-Hoover camps. He had joined the Bull Mooser's forces with the pledge that, in the event of failure, Knox would not deliver his strength elsewhere. MacChesney, at Knox's request, solicited the aid of Walter Brown in heading off Borah in Ohio.²² Hoover and Brown agreed that the best path was the "alignment of uninstructed delegations." To them, such a course would be "better for our friend than an actual fight, as that always leads to difficulties."²³

Knox, in an optimistic mood, decided to take the more hazardous course. He said, "I am putting my political future to the test by taking on Borah in Ohio." Knox acknowledged Brown's support and concluded that Illinois and Ohio would make or break his candidacy. He was amused at Landon's predicament concerning the Hearst maneuver which had placed the Kansan in the California primary.²⁴

Hoover, stumping the country in defense of his ideas, arrived in Portland, Oregon, for a Lincoln Day Address to

²²MacChesney to Hoover, February 6, 1936, K-86. Ickes Diary, I, 463, discusses the MacChesney-Knox relationship.

²³Hoover to MacChesney, February 11, 1936, K-86, dealt with Knox and the Ohio situation and concluded that a fight could be the best move in spite of the obvious dangers.

²⁴Knox to Hoover, February 15, and February 27, 1936, K-72, admitted that Illinois was posing a tight race. Brown to Hoover, February 24, 1936, K-16, indicated the probability that Knox and all aspirants but Borah would bypass the Ohio primary. Taft would head a "favorite son" delegation.

a state GOP conference. The press noted Hoover's new buoyancy, cheerfulness, and geniality. After conferring with Oregon political leaders, the ex-President promised to "continue fighting the New Deal as long as it existed."²⁵

On February 12, he spoke of "The Confused State of the Union," an obvious rebuttal to FDR's recent State of the Union message. After noting the grave times in which they lived, Hoover launched into an attack on New Deal methods. His intended purpose was to expose the unprecedented debt, inflation, centralization, regimentation, and abridgement of liberty.²⁶

To him, the New Deal meant "planned deficits and planned politics." He listed the abuses of NRA and AAA and the subsequent confusion. He lamented the restricted production, the elimination of competition, the price fixing, the increased costs, higher prices, strikes, the plowing under of crops, the slaughtering of animals, the decline in food consumption, and the "economy of scarcity." He said that the waste and inefficiency of the New Deal were unsurpassed. He charged that relief was administered by political battalions under the most costly spoils system in history. To him, the facts and figures told the story. During his own

²⁵Hoover Collections, LSIVA (February 12-13, 1936), Item 2267, 2269.

²⁶Ibid., Item 2270. New York Times, February 13, 1936. "Towers of Babel," Vital Speeches, II, February 24, 1936, 332-335; Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 114-116.

Administration, eighty-one per cent of the government employees had been under civil service, whereas under the New Deal only fifty-seven per cent were.²⁷ Despite the New Deal assaults on the Constitution, the Supreme Court had recently checked the excessive violations. Nonetheless, the fallacious policies enacted had led the nation to a new state of confusion.²⁸

Again, Hooverites applauded what to them was their Chief's penetrating analysis and his logical presentation of the facts.²⁹ Crowther, convinced that Hoover's efforts were forcing New Dealers into a defensive position, hoped that other GOP speakers would "get down to brass tacks."³⁰ Ted Joslin reported a growing esteem among the press corps for the former President.³¹

The Boston Globe described Hoover as the Administration's "most versatile opponent." Too, he was displaying a "new resourcefulness" and strength.³² There was increasing

²⁷Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 116-119.

²⁸Ibid., 121-125.

²⁹Crowther to Hoover, February 12, 1936, K-25; Joslin to Hoover, February 18, 1936, K-66. Strauss to Hoover, February 19, 1936, K-130, said that "everyone" was impressed by his biting speech.

³⁰Crother to Hoover, February 12, 1936, K-25.

³¹Joslin to Hoover, February 18, 1936, K-66. See the San Francisco Chronicle, January 29, 1936, 1.

³²Boston Globe, March 9, 1936, D-245.

talk of a "new" Hoover.³³ Even the New Republic, eternally critical of the "great engineer," was compelled to discuss the "new" Hoover. In a devastating attack, "Who's Hoover?" the magazine answered its own question by calling him "an attractive package with a misleading label." All the Hollywood arts, it said, were utilized in dressing up the "old" Hoover. It pointed out that in 1931, a "new" Hoover, the happy engineer, had been promoted. However, the 1935 edition, it said, was a "new" effort aimed at inflating the "old" balloon before the 1936 convention.³⁴

Speculation on presidential candidacies remained the most popular topic of conversation. Following the Lincoln Day Dinners across the country, Vandenberg informed Fox that Borah delegates were planning to endorse the Michigan Senator "at the proper time." Everyone was certain that the Borah effort had stalled.³⁵ Senate leaders were amiable to

³³Fort to Hoover, February 28, 1936, K-39. Fort and other Hooverites, encouraged by the increasing impression of the "new" Hoover, wondered "whether the movement could be sufficiently accelerated between now and June." Fort believed that Edge was after the vice-presidential spot on the Landon ticket.

³⁴"Who's Hoover," New Republic, XLXVI (March 11, 1936), 137-138. Despite H.H.'s depression handicap, he remained politically significant. No one could ignore him or the fact that he commanded a large coterie of supporters who wanted another nomination for him, with or without his consent.

³⁵Fox to Hoover, February 13, 1936, K-39. Fox thought that Vandenberg's disclosure sounded "screwy but . . . according to Vanderberg, Landon was only after the Vice-Presidency!" Hoover to Fox, February 25, 1936, K-39, admitted that Borah

a Vandenberg candidacy, and as the "leading conservative Republican in Congress," as an isolationist on foreign policy, and as a compromise possibility, Vandenberg received increasing attention. Interestingly, both Hooverites and Senate progressives liked the Michigan leader.³⁶ Rumors even flew that Hoover was "more intent upon the nomination of Vandenberg on a strong anti-New Deal platform" than an effort for his own renomination.³⁷ If the ex-President was determined to seek the nomination, he showed an atypical canniness in playing off one aspirant against the other, and in convincing each candidate that he would receive the ultimate blessing. Whatever Hoover's actual intentions, by the time that the convention assembled, Mills, Knox, Dickinson, and Vandenberg were purported to have received the Hoover endorsement.

The former President, anxious for Landon's reprimand of Hearst, and an avoidance of a primary fight which would splinter the California Party, decided to visit the

was finished, but he thought that Landon was in ascendancy. When the Literary Digest poll of January, 1936, showed 62% opposed to the New Deal, the GOP nomination's attractiveness increased. San Francisco Chronicle, January 17, 1936.

³⁶James T. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism And The New Deal (Lexington, 1967), 102-103. George Wolfskill, The Revolt of the Conservatives (Boston, 1962), 203-204. Patterson states that despite Vandenberg's overall popularity, he had liabilities. As Oregon's Senator McNary noted, he symbolized "vacuity, vacillation, and Vandenberg."

³⁷Wolfskill, Revolt of the Conservatives, 201.

Kansan.³⁸ Ogden Mills, having defected to the Landon camp in spite of his Chief's comeback, assured Hoover that the Governor, regardless of the Hearst maneuvers, would not permit his name to be filed in the California primary.³⁹

Ed Schorr, Chairman of the Ohio Republican Party, wrote Hoover that "under election laws of Ohio" a prospective candidate's consent was necessary in order for delegates to file his name for the Republican National Convention.⁴⁰ Hoover was adamant in his refusal to permit his name to be entered in the primaries. Walter Brown informed the Chief that Knox, Vandenberg, Dickinson, and even Landon had agreed to bypass the Ohio primary. Thus, the state committee had readily endorsed Robert A. Taft as a "favorite son." However, Borah, uncooperative as usual, planned an Ohio battle.⁴¹ But then the "Idaho lion" had always been a "porcupine."⁴²

Hoover, strongly believing that a party "not in power has an obligation to scrutinize every act that will oppose

³⁸Hoover to W. Brown, February 28, 1936, K-16.

³⁹Hoover to Henry Allen, February 20, 1936, K-2. Drew Pearson, "Merry-Go-Round," Washington Star, February 22, 1936. Pearson, after the sensational, spoke of a split in the Hoover ranks.

⁴⁰Schorr to Hoover, February 19, 1936, K-16.

⁴¹W. Brown to Hoover, February 24, and February 28, 1936, K-16.

⁴²Robert Bendiner, Just Around the Corner (New York, 1967), 149. Borah, "in practice was not so much a lone wolf as a lone porcupine."

the welfare of the people,"⁴³ urged Spangler to investigate the character of loans made by the government. The ex-President was convinced there were several "unusual loans."⁴⁴ Spangler, encouraged by the progress of his Midwestern organization, decided to open a West Coast branch. He hoped that the Chief would designate a leader.⁴⁵ Hoover recommended Chester Rowell, the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle.⁴⁶

On March 7, Hoover addressed the Colorado Young Republican League on "True Liberalism." The ex-President, agitated at the efforts of some politicians to label the New Deal as liberal, defined the American System, individualism, "equality of opportunity," and liberty, as the only true liberalism. Regarding economics, the supreme test of liberalism, he defined three avenues which governments could take: an unregulated economy, a government-regulated economy, and a government-dictated economy. To Hoover, the American System had traditionally embraced the middle course.⁴⁷

Hoover accused the New Deal of taking the third avenue. The New Deal, he said, had disrupted competition,

⁴³Christian Science Monitor, February 15, 1936.

⁴⁴Hoover to Spangler, January 30, 1936, K-127.

⁴⁵Spangler to Hoover, February 12, 1936, K-127.

⁴⁶Hoover to Spangler, telegram, February 20, 1936, K-127.

⁴⁷Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 126-134. New York Times, March 8, 1936, 1.

encouraged monopoly, encouraged a waste of natural resources, negated labor's responsibility, and stifled "equality of opportunity." He blasted the administration's seizure of broader regulatory powers which rightfully, he thought, belonged to the states and local governments. To him, America was threatened by a managed currency, a managed credit, a debased currency, a "debauchery of the civil service," an unexcelled political opportunism, and a denial of fundamental liberty. To him, no reactionary government had ever dreamed of such bureaucratic control. Did anyone dare call such a system "liberalism"? Warming to his attack, the ex-President demanded a restoration of liberty and real liberalism.⁴⁸

Before the end of the month, Hoover, responding to the questions of the Chicago press, outlined the four major tasks of his party as: repudiation of the New Deal, proposal of a constructive alternative, nomination of the best qualified man, and consolidation of the party factions.⁴⁹

As the Knox candidacy began to lose steam, several Hooverites hoped for a draft-Hoover movement through public demand.⁵⁰ Whatever his own attitude, Hoover informed Knox that California, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado would probably

⁴⁸Ibid.; Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 134-138.

⁴⁹Hoover Collections, LXIVA (March 29, 1936), Item 2281.

⁵⁰Strauss to Hoover, February 19, 1936, K-130.

send unpledged delegations to the convention.⁵¹ Walter Newton made a cross-sectional survey of public attitude toward the GOP candidates, and disclosed a Landon, Knox, and Borah order prevailing everywhere. Hoover sentiment, he noted, was strongest in the South. Georgia could deliver eighty per cent of its delegation to a Hoover standard. He found that Kentucky showed some Hoover and Dickinson flavor. Two West Virginia delegates were openly supporting the ex-President. The Alabama delegation, although friendly, doubted Hoover's availability.⁵² Obviously, the Alabama reasoning was widespread.

Walter Edge's endorsement of Landon reflected the growing strength of the Kansan in the East.⁵³ The California primary loomed larger as it was the one obstacle in the Landon path. In New Jersey, Frank Fort, in an effort to reach the Republican Convention, ran as a delegate-at-large and as a Landon delegate. He hoped to encourage "some of the weak-kneed brethren to think in terms of winning on principle rather than expediency."⁵⁴ Fox, still hoping for a draft-

⁵¹Hoover to Knox, February 24, 1936, K-72.

⁵²Newton to Richey, March 18, 1936, and Newton to Hoover, March 21, 1936, K-97.

⁵³O 'Laughlin to Hoover, March 21, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. Edge, Jerseyman's Journal, 243, reasoned that the East had dominated presidential conventions long enough. He was "an enthusiastic Landon supporter."

⁵⁴Fort to Hoover, April 4, 1936, K-38. Hoover to Fort, April 9, 1936, K-38, replied that "whatever you do is alright with me."

Hoover Committee, thought that the California primary could enable loyalists to boost Hoover stock through public polls following a California victory. The New Yorker was convinced that the Chief, Dickinson, or Vandenberg could be nominated. Hilles, obviously hoping to line up with the eventual winner, remained uncommitted.⁵⁵

Samuel Crowther, a loyal Hooverite, expressed dissatisfaction with the front runners: "Knox has the information and the backbone of a jelly fish and . . . is a mental mess." To him, Landon was no better.⁵⁶ On the tariff, he said, Landon did "not know what it is about, while Knox, in his New York speech, showed that he did not even know enough to keep quiet."⁵⁷

On April 4, speaking at Fort Wayne, Indiana, Hoover asked, "Has the New Deal Solved Our National Problems?" Answering his own question in the negative, the ex-President stated that the "phantasmagoria of propaganda" by the New Dealers was "leading to a corruption of clear thinking" which was "far more insidious and destructive" than all the dangerous violations of freedom.⁵⁸

In an effort to construct the "true picture," Hoover

⁵⁵Fox to Hoover, March 31, and April 1, 1936, K-39.

⁵⁶Crowther to Hoover, April 1, 1936, K-25.

⁵⁷Crowther to Hoover, April 17, 1936, K-25.

⁵⁸Hoover Collection, LXIVA (April 4, 1936), Item 2283. Vital Speeches, II, April 20, 1936, 444-449. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 142-146.

reiterated his depression efforts, their success, the brutal interruption of recovery due to the 1932 election, the induced bank panic, the disastrous New Deal methods and their consequent setbacks, and the need for retrenchment. He strongly denied that he "was the father of the New Deal." His monetary policies had been reversed, his constitutional methods ignored, and his positive solutions rejected. Hoover recounted the numerous New Deal sins: regimentation, bureaucracy, inflation, restricted production, debasement of the currency, economic scarcity, monopoly, and unconstitutional methods. The New Deal was a proven failure, he said, and it was time for change.⁵⁹

To a California convention of young Republicans, he sent a message impressing upon them "The Duty of the Republican Party." As leaders of the future, he called theirs a tremendous responsibility. He thought that they must rally the people to a reaffirmation of principle and that the GOP was the only tool for reform. He urged them to display "open minds," "fresh idealism," and "determination."⁶⁰

Although the ex-President rightly sensed "that an open pursuit of the nomination would be both unseemly and impolitic," he probably harbored hopes of a draft.⁶¹ In

⁵⁹Ibid., 148-157.

⁶⁰Hoover Collection, LXIVA (April 16, 1936), Item 2287. New York Times, April 19, 1936, 1.

⁶¹Bendiner, Just Around the Corner, 149.

April, the Knox candidacy collapsed. The Kentucky delegation switched from the Bull Mooser to the "Kansas Coolidge."⁶² The Illinois primary dealt the Knox forces the fatal blow. Although the Chicagoan outpolled Borah, 490,000 to 420,000 votes, the minuscule nature of the victory underlined Knox's weakness.⁶³ California remained the only obstacle to a Landon sweep. The Kansas City Star charged the ex-President with blocking the Landon drive.⁶⁴

William Allen White, appraising the situation, wrote Landon that the Hearst endorsement was a "kiss of death" and that the Governor should disassociate himself from the powerful and controversial publisher.⁶⁵ Hearst and the Landon managers were affronting the ex-President, which could weaken Landon's presidential bid.⁶⁶ Ogden Mills tried to prevent

⁶²O 'Laughlin to Hoover, April 4, 1936. Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. The Hoover aide also noted that New Jersey was solidly for Landon.

⁶³Mayer, The Republicans, 437, 440. W. Brown to Hoover, April 18, 1936, K-16.

⁶⁴Hyde to Hoover, April 8, 1936, and Hoover to Hyde, April 15, 1936, K-61, denied the charge. Hoover to White, April 14, and April 17, 1936, K-147, expressed disgust at the insinuations of the Landon managers.

⁶⁵White to Landon, April 21, 1936, Selected Letters, 362-364.

⁶⁶Ibid.; Hoover to A. Brown, April 22, 1936, K-15. Hoover to Henry Allen, April 21, 1936, K-2. Hoover to White, April 14, and April 17, 1936, K-147, warned that the Hearst endorsement and the splintering of the Bear State Party would assure a November defeat for Landon, if he gained the nomination.

the filing of the Hearst slate in California.⁶⁷

California Republicans "liked and respected Hoover." Their hopes for a deadlocked convention were matched by their hatred for Hearst, the Landon promoter. Consequently, Earl Warren, a Hoover disciple, who had worked his way up from a Hoover delegate of 1928 to the state chairmanship by 1934, drew up a list of the top names in the state party and announced that he would head an uninstructed delegation to the 1936 convention. Warren so deftly outmaneuvered Hearst that Landon even disclaimed his own slate in California's May primary. Despite the difficulties in voting for an uninstructed delegation, Warren and his independent colleagues scored a major upset in their victory.⁶⁸

Although Hoover claimed that he had tried to prevent any criticism of the Kansan by the California press, and had only wanted "an uninstructed delegation" for the purpose of influencing the platform and maintaining the unity of the

⁶⁷W. Brown to Hoover, April 18, 1936, K-16. White to Landon, April 21, 1936, Selected Letters, 362-364, assured the Governor of Mills' loyalty and of the New Yorker's disinterest in the vice-presidency. White said that the Hearst backing had even scared off Hilles. Too, Congressional Republicans were lining up for Vandenberg.

⁶⁸Leo Katcher, Earl Warren: A Political Biography (New York, 1967), 83-85. Katcher says Hoover desperately wanted to "challenge Roosevelt again." The Warren slate was independent as much as pro-Hoover. However, it did prove that Landon was not "in" as the nominee.

California GOP,⁶⁹ Hooverites saw the primary as a check to the Landon momentum.⁷⁰

William Allen White conferred with Lewis Strauss and apologized for "the necessity of supporting Mr. Landon whom he described as ideal in every respect 'except he has no experience in national affairs and not even an acquaintance with international affairs.'"⁷¹

Creager, although personally favoring the ex-President, and inclined to accept the possibility of another Hoover campaign, doubted GOP chances in November. Too, he thought that Hoover's depression image would be an additional problem. The Texan did agree with Brown that the best poll would ask, "Whom did you vote for in 1932 and for whom would you vote

⁶⁹Hoover to H. Allen, April 21, 1936, K-2, Hoover to Allen, April 24, 1936, K-2; and Hoover to A. Brown, April 22, 1936, K-15. Hoover to White, April 17, 1936, K-147.

⁷⁰W. Brown to Hoover, April 18, 1936, K-15. Strauss to Hoover, April 23, 1936, K-130. Joslin to Hoover, April 11, 1936, K-66, said that a California victory would stall the Landon express. He assumed that the Chief was more receptive to a nomination now. If not, then Knox or Vandenberg were probably Hoover's favorites as rumors reflected. Newton to Hoover, May 7, 1936, K-97, spoke of H.H.'s great personal victory in California. Ben Allen, H.H.'s phrase-maker, wired Strauss, "We have won by a handsome majority." Ben Allen to Strauss, telegram, May 5, 1936, K-130. In a letter to A. Brown, H.H., still angered at the personal insult of Hearst and Landon, was pleased with their "overwhelming" defeat. Hoover to A. Brown, May 7, 1936, K-16. Frank Fort thought that the door was wide open and hoped to have "influence with the Maryland and Pennsylvania delegations." Fort to Hoover, May 9, 1936, K-38.

⁷¹Strauss to Hoover, April 23, 1936, K-130, admitted that Larry Richey's presence may have encouraged White to temper his remarks.

now if the same candidates were running?"⁷² Ogden Mills, again pessimistic about Republican chances, was amazed at FDR's "ignorance or dishonesty" and feared the incumbent would be returned to office.⁷³

Mills' doubts were hardly altered with the California primary, or the Who's Who Poll which showed Hoover outgaining Landon by a 2381 to 2294 vote total.⁷⁴ The Chief, referring to his scheduled Philadelphia speech, said it would be his "last speech" and would deal "mostly with moral issues."⁷⁵ Enroute to Philadelphia, the ex-President told the Chicago press that the GOP would win in November regardless of their candidate.⁷⁶

On May 14, Hoover spoke in the Quaker city on "An American Platform." His speech was the most direct personal

⁷²Fox to Hoover, April 23, 1936, K-39. Fox reported that the Chief had drawn even with Landon in the incompletd Who's Who Presidential Poll. W. Brown to Hoover, April 18, 1936, K-16.

⁷³Mills to Hoover, April, 1936, K-92.

⁷⁴Fox to Hoover, May 1, 1936, K-39, disclosed the final poll results.

⁷⁵Hoover to Mills, May 2, 1936, K-92.

⁷⁶Hoover Collection, LXIVA (May 10, 1936), Item 2290. Although H.H.'s constant predictions of victory were used to prove his lack of realism, he was playing a political role and like the far more able politicians he sometimes imitated, he was reassuring his party workers of the possibility of victory. In private, however, he showed realism which greatly contradicted his public predictions of 1932, 1934, and 1936. At times he failed to anticipate the depth of defeat, but throughout the lean years he informed his closest lieutenants that the GOP would lose, and by a decisive margin.

attack that he had ever made on Roosevelt. He noted the President's advice to young people "to dream dreams and see visions." Hoover advised them "to wake up." He warned that America was further down the road to collectivism than she realized. The time had come, he said, for "a restoration of morals in government" and for "courage in the destiny of America."⁷⁷

To Hoover, the Administration had pursued false economic and social policies. As usual, he cited its unpardonable sins. The Republican Party, he said, must restore the American System with its "regulated business and compulsory competition" minus the government dictation and regimentation. To him, the states must regain their independent powers. He said that only the Supreme Court had checked efforts to create a fascist state. To him, "our trouble today is moral as well as economic." He pleaded for a revitalization of traditional "virtues of thrift and honor and hard work" which could lead the nation forward once again.⁷⁸

Hoover, in his Philadelphia speech, stigmatized the New Deal as being as progressive as a slow-motion film run backward." He referred to it as the "Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Pork Barrel, Poppycock, Privilege, Panaceas,

⁷⁷Hoover Collection, LXIVA (May 14, 1936), Item 2293. Vital Speeches, II, June 1, 1936, 555-559.

⁷⁸Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 162-171.

and poverty." This speech and the California primary gave him a "freshened political prestige."⁷⁹ Too, letters to the editor in the Christian Science Monitor, the New York Herald Tribune, and the Chicago Daily News, as well as other metropolitan newspapers, indicated the overwhelming rank and file support for him.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, party leaders continued to doubt his availability or his November chances.

Everyone remained friendly toward the ex-President but few expressed enthusiasm for his nomination.⁸¹ Hooverites continued to hope that "the Convention will muddle around awhile and then wind up tied to the only pier strong enough to hold the ship of state."⁸²

On May 18, the ex-President met with the press. He issued the following statement:

It should be evident by this time that I am not a candidate. I have stated many times that I have no interest but to get these critical issues before the country. I have rigidly prevented my friends from setting up any organization and from presenting

⁷⁹"Brisk Hoover," Literary Digest, CXXI (May 23, 1936), 6.

⁸⁰D-245, Hoover Presidential Library, contains political newspaper clippings and some 400 letters to the editor of major newspapers urging H.H.'s nomination in 1936 as the logical and necessary step.

⁸¹Fox to Hoover, May 25, 1936, K-39. Fox still hoped for a Hoover-Landon ticket. He admitted that Knox and Vandenberg had no chance for a nomination.

⁸²Fort to Hoover, May 23, 1936, K-38. Fort admitted that "everyone" was shocked at his defeat, by some 40,000 votes, for convention delegate.

my name in any primary or to any convention.
 . . . My concern is with principles.⁸³

Hoover denied that any delegates were committed to him.

O 'Laughlin and other Hooverites continued to hope for a draft. The Washington adviser wanted the Chief to speak to the convention. To him, a personal appearance and a dynamic speech by the Chief might set off "a spark."⁸⁴ Borah's attempt to smear Landon with oil, as well as the Kansan's obvious mediocrity, provided, in O 'Laughlin's mind, a glimmer of hope.⁸⁵

As Hooverites desired, the ex-President was invited to address the Cleveland Convention.⁸⁶ He reiterated his belief that the GOP could win in November with "a candidate who can arouse the moral and spiritual instincts of the country."⁸⁷ Privately, anticipating his Cleveland appearance, Hoover told Hyde, "I wish I had a divine inspiration to present this issue to them in such a way as to carry

⁸³Hoover Collection, LXIVA (May 18, 1936), Item 2294. Even conscious of the past and the Coolidge experience, H.H. knew well that only a determined fight could stop the Landon bandwagon. Like his presidential predecessor, he did not want the nomination badly enough to dispute it.

⁸⁴Fort to Hoover, May 23, 1936, K-38, hoped for a dramatic change. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, May 11, and May 23, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. O 'Laughlin informed General Douglas MacArthur that the Chief would accept a draft.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Hoover Collection, LXIVA (May 29, 1936), Item 2295.

⁸⁷Hoover to Kellogg, May 23, 1936, K-67.

conviction."⁸⁸

As the Republican Convention approached, many men expected the Landon push to fall short.⁸⁹ Raymond Moley saw Hoover as a man of "massive convictions and intelligence" and the only "alternative to the New Deal."⁹⁰ FDR himself was convinced that the mass of Republicans preferred Hoover, and at the least, Vandenberg. Yet, he noted that "Landon was being rammed down their throats" as available.⁹¹

By the time the GOP convened in Cleveland, the Eastern establishment, the perennial Presidential selector, sensing a November defeat, decided on a "sop to the West." The Jersey boss and "dapper midget" Daniel Pomeroy joined the Connecticut boss, Henry Roraback in a Landon endorsement. Even "taciturn, thin-lipped" Charlie Hilles of New York indicated his willingness "to fall in line." Bascom Slemph,

⁸⁸Hoover to Hyde, May 30, 1936, K-61. In almost identical letters, Hoover wrote Fort and Bascom Slemph that he had no desire to be a "hanger-on at the convention" and that he had completed the job which he "set out to do." Hoover to Fort, May 26, 1936, K-38. Hoover to Slemph, May 23, 1936, K-124.

⁸⁹Crowther to Richey, June 3, and Crowther to Hoover, June 3, 1936, K-25. The writer agreed with Henry Ford that the GOP could not deny their sole leader. Landon's campaign, he said, was pusillanimous.

⁹⁰Moley, 27 Masters of Politics, 26-27. According to Moley, the President, contrary to popular myth, feared H.H. of all the possible GOP candidates. FDR thought H.H. capable of offering an alternative program. He also bet his former adviser that H.H. would be the nominee.

⁹¹FDR: His Personal Letters (New York, 1945), 585-586.

"the wily politician who for years had dealt out the Southern delegations like so many black-and-tan packages of coffee across the counter" gave the Kansas Governor the nod. "One of the most masterly jobs of creative journalism" resulted in a presidential nomination.⁹²

While the Ohio group shoved Walter Brown from power in his own baliwick, ex-Senator Dave Reed, of the Mellon barony of Pennsylvania, watched in awe and helplessness as the Landon bandwagon rolled toward victory despite the uncommitted status of the large Pennsylvania and New York delegations.⁹³

On June 6, Hoover blasted the "minimum wage laws" as a violation of state authority. He pointed to the success and exemplary nature of California's minimum wage laws and questioned the constitutionality of a federal measure.⁹⁴ Hoover remained the obvious GOP candidate if his ideas were accepted. Hence, the struggle over the platform became crucial in the minds of Hooverites.

Despite the usual ambiguity, the GOP platform was mild in its tone. Significantly, there were no demands for

⁹²Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 422-426; Raymond Clapper, Watching the World (New York, 1944), 136, says that the Eastern clique traditionally nominated Presidents while the Western wing dominated Congress. Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 539-541, credited the Eastern bosses and business politicians such as Mills with the Landon selection.

⁹³Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 423.

⁹⁴Hoover Collection, LXIVA (June 6, 1936), Item 2296. New York Times, June 7, 1936.

repeal of any major New Deal laws, and it even encouraged the expansion of unemployment relief and farm benefits.⁹⁵ Hoover was pleased with the gold plank of the platform and probably encouraged by Landon's disavowal of several minor planks.⁹⁶ The Governor was grandstanding in an effort to appear more independent of the bosses.⁹⁷ Roosevelt, in his normal jocosity, said that the Republicans had declared "in favor of the Ten Commandments, proclaiming from housetops that the Democratic Party wished a) to amend the Ten Commandments, b) to add to the Ten Commandments, and c) to scrap the Ten Commandments. On this issue they are confident they can sweep the country."⁹⁸

On June 10, Herbert Hoover appeared before the GOP Convention and spoke of "The Road to Freedom." As expected, it was one of Hoover's most moving and moralistic speeches. He spoke of the "greatest responsibility . . . in three generations." To him, this convention would "determine the

⁹⁵Pendleton Herring, The Politics of Democracy (New York, 1940), 235-236, says that platforms inevitably force compromise on sectional, ethnic, and economic views. The platform fell short of Chet Rowell's proposed "positive program" in its agricultural plank and its failure to defend H.H.'s achievements. Chester H. Rowell, "A Positive Program for the Republican Party," Yale Review, XXIV (Spring, 1936), 443-457.

⁹⁶Hoover Collection, LXIVA (June 11, 1936), Item 2299. New York Times, June 12, 1936, 1.

⁹⁷Herring, Politics of Democracy, 236.

⁹⁸Adler, Presidential Wit, 136.

fate of those ideals for which this nation was founded."⁹⁹

"There is," he said, "a moral purpose in the universe." To him, nations had souls. Whether from stupidity and sheer opportunism, or a "cold-blooded attempt by starry-eyed boys," the New Deal, he charged, had, in its collectivism, regimentation, and immorality, led America toward "a grim precipice" which was crippling and might destroy "the freedom of men." Never before, he noted, had the nation been exposed to so much hatred and greed for power.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, he said, New Dealers showed "little indication of repentance." To him, a courageous press, the Supreme Court, and a few oppositionist speakers were all that had saved the people. Repeated violations of natural economic laws, he said, had taken a "few hundred thousand earnest party workers to the Promised Land." To him, the nation as a whole continued to suffer. Too, he thought that there were certain "moral laws written in a Great Book [which amounted to] a gospel of brotherhood." However, he

⁹⁹Twenty-First Republican National Convention (New York, 1936), 115-125. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 173-174. Hyde to Hoover, May 23, 1936, K-6, made several suggestions for the Cleveland address. For Hyde, there was "one issue and only one: liberty." He doubted GOP courage and feared their failure to defend liberty would result in another Whig fiasco. It would be better, he said, "to risk the husks of victory for a crusade which shall determine the future of the nation." Principle, to him, was more enduring. He said that there "must be no compromise on the issue of human liberty." He continued to hope for H.H.'s draft as the nominee.

¹⁰⁰Vital Speeches, II, 570-573. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 173-174.

found that the New Deal had bred class hatred, fear, and destruction.¹⁰¹

"We have arrived at the hour [when] the New Deal may be a revolutionary design," he charged. Too, he thought that it was "poisoning Americanism." To him, the New Deal had delayed recovery long enough, and the GOP had a duty, a moral obligation, to restore "freedom in the economic field." There were eternal inviolable principles.¹⁰²

He continued:

Here in America, where the tablets of human freedom were first handed down, their sacred word has been flouted. Today the stern task is before the Republican Party to restore the Ark of the Covenant to the temple in Washington. . . . Shall we keep the faith? There are some principles which cannot be compromised.¹⁰³

In his attempt to give his party the issue, liberty, Hoover urged the convention to courageously face the problem. "Ideals and character," he said, were the essence of man. To him, man must be free to plan, to think, to act, and to succeed. Questioning the convention, he asked:

Is the Republican Party ready for the issue? . . . Will you for expediency's sake, also offer will-o-the-wisps which beguile the people? Or have you

¹⁰¹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 175-178.

¹⁰²Ibid., 178-181.

¹⁰³Ibid., 181. The religious imagery and H.H.'s moralism were seldom more evident than in his Cleveland speech. Rarely and never more sincerely did he speak from his heart. Modern demonstrators have frequently used his language and expressed his emotion. To his followers he undoubtedly had "soul."

determined to enter in a holy crusade for liberty which shall determine the future and the perpetuity of a nation of free men? . . . Republicans and fellow Americans, this is your Call.¹⁰⁴

Pandemonium broke loose as the crowd wept, stood on its seats, shouted, cheered, and sang "Onward Christian Soldiers." The big prune-faced man at the podium was receiving the greatest political ovation of his career.¹⁰⁵ He had released their "pent-up evangelism" and called them to "a holy crusade." Their hearts belonged to him.¹⁰⁶ In a crescendo of personal tribute they recognized his fidelity, his patience, his sportsmanship.¹⁰⁷ The Hoover ovation was also due to a "guilty conscience." The ex-President had labored for the party. "With a far more adept hand than he

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 182-183.

¹⁰⁵Edwin P. Hoyt, Jumbos and Jackasses (Garden City, 1960), 350. Bendiner, Just Around the Corner, 154. Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 545-546. Clapper, My World, 143-145. San Francisco Chronicle, June 11, 1936, 1; Philadelphia Public Ledger, June 11, 1936, 1, said that "Hoover came and saw and conquered for a night." Minneapolis Tribune, June 11, 1936, 1, said that "the night gave him the last full measure of vindication." Los Angeles Times, June 11, 1936; Requa to Hoover, June 21, 1936, K-108; and Oliver Street to Mrs. C. C. Morgan, June 29, 1936, K-132, are of value. Street said, "I never saw anything like it at a National Convention. An almost religious spirit pervaded it. . . . Tears and love shown in every eye."

¹⁰⁶Bendiner, Just Around the Corner, 3, 154. Bendiner, who once saw Hoover as having "no more flair than an assistant funeral director, "thought he now owned the hearts and souls of Republicans." For expedience, they passed over their true favorites in every convention from 1936 to 1964.

¹⁰⁷Clapper, My World, June 11, 1936, 143-145.

showed in his greater political days," he had provided the issue.¹⁰⁸

Despite their disavowals, the Landon managers must have felt uneasy at the ex-President's ovation and the hearty chants of "we want Hoover."¹⁰⁹ Landonites were convinced of an eleventh-hour attempt by Hoover to gain the nomination. They reasoned that the emotional ovation led him to believe a stampede was in the making. Snell, the temporary chairman, they alleged, announced Hoover's departure for New York while the ex-President actually returned to his hotel and pressed Vandenberg and Knox for an endorsement. The two leaders apparently informed him that it was too

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Clapper thought that H.H. skillfully used history, imagery, and nuance in his discussion of GOP tradition as espousing liberty from the slavery days of the nineteenth century to the new tyranny of the 1930's. It was the ex-President's swan song, a dramatic finish. Street to Mrs. C. C. Morgan, June 29, 1936, K-132, expressed disgust with GOP cowardice, and admitted that the GOP convention had been "like a good old fashion Methodist camp-meeting."

¹⁰⁹Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 428. Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 541-546, 616, credits Republicans with buying off Borah with a few platform planks, and H.H. with an ovation. Schlesinger thinks that Hoover captured "the mood of the Republican Party" and its "hysterical certitude that the Republic was on the verge of collapse."

late.¹¹⁰ Whatever the case, Landon was nominated the next morning.¹¹¹

Hoover was "highly gratified" at his reception at the convention. Following the nomination of a Landon-Knox ticket, the former President said: "Every ounce of energy I have is at the call and command of my party."¹¹² In an effort to display unity, Vandenberg, Knox, Dickinson, and Robert A. Taft made seconding speeches for Landon.¹¹³ Many Hooverites burned at the thoughtless rejection of their hero.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰Mayer, The Republicans, 440-442, says Chester Rowell, the chairman of the California delegation, served as an intermediary. The only scrap of corroborating evidence in the Hoover Papers is a Fox to Richey letter of June 3, 1936, K-39. Fox was informed by Edgar Rickard of the program "to use Lowden to head off Landon." This could easily mean the platform instead of the nomination. H.H. made no serious effort to collect delegates in 1936, aside from the California primary. On the other hand, his correspondence shows a marked receptivity in 1940. Although he could have destroyed letters proving a 1936 attempt, why did he not tamper with the 1940 letters? At no time did he express any belief that he could be nominated in 1936. See his Memoirs, II, 194-195, for a realistic approach on the belief that anyone who wants a nomination must fight for it. To him, a movement only went as far as its leader would take it. The riddle of his 1936 efforts will never be cleared despite his obvious wish for vindication.

¹¹¹Wolfe, Hoover, 370.

¹¹²Hoover Collection, LXIVA (June 11, 1936), Item 2301. New York Times, June 11, June 13, and June 21, 1936, 1.

¹¹³Wolfskill, Revolt of the Conservatives, 201-205.

¹¹⁴Fort to Hoover, June 28, 1936, K-28. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, June 13, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, was dismayed at the convention's failure to recognize brains and character. Dawes to Hoover, June 25, 1936, K-28, regretted

Privately, Hoover expressed disgust at "the funeral eulogies . . . by all the press. As a last flower on the grave, they have elected me Elder Statesman." He hoped to organize the job and "chagrin the funeral directors."¹¹⁵

The press probably sensed a Hoover finale because of Walter Brown's failure to be returned to the National Committee. The Ohio lieutenant's defeat undercut Hoover's chance of holding "a high card or two in 1940."¹¹⁶

Hoover's convention address had served as a clarion call to the disenchanted. To many Republicans, he had given

the spineless Republicans who ignored "the logical candidate . . . the leader of the party in its darkest and most discouraging days." Rickard to Mills, June 13, 1936, Box 53, Mills Papers, said that Hooverites, in general, understood that "but for [Mills'] intervention, the New York delegates would have postponed their caucus until after Mr. Hoover made his speech." Rickard wanted Mills' version. Mills served as a Landon adviser and was looked on as a "traitor" by Hooverites. The Chief was hurt and the close Hoover-Mills relationship was never restored although the two men corresponded infrequently during the remaining years of Mills' life. Fox to Hoover, June 23, 1936, K-39, said that "everyone" really wanted a Hoover-Landon ticket. Theron Bronson, a Connecticut Republican, and faithful H.H. admirer, likened him to Lincoln, "one of the great saviors of the real liberties of men." Bronson to Hoover, June 13, 1936, K-15.

¹¹⁵Hoover to Brown, June 23, 1936, K-16. Hoover to Hyde, June 22, 1936, K-61, expressed the desire to organize "a militant band" to disprove the obituaries. Hoover to Dawes, June 29, 1936, K-28.

¹¹⁶Brown to Hoover, June 29, 1936, K-16, admitted that his main purpose in trying to maintain his seat on the committee was to aid Hoover. Too, he foresaw that the Chief's "restless spirit will find no satisfaction in the role of Elder Statesman."

the campaign "a tone of high purpose and resolve."¹¹⁷ In the months ahead John Hamilton, the National Chairman, and Frank Knox, the vice-presidential nominee, would echo the Hoover line.¹¹⁸

According to one historian, Landon's "colorless personality and inadequacy as a speaker" hamstrung his efforts against the dynamic Roosevelt.¹¹⁹ The "dull" Governor was the very antithesis of the suave, sophisticated, colorful incumbent. Landon's "halting, labored midwestern twang" and "homespun simplicity" were underlined by FDR's contrast.¹²⁰ The President was reassured by the Kansan's nomination, for

¹¹⁷Hamilton to Hoover, June 16, 1936, K-46. MacChesney to Hoover, June 16, 1936, K-86. Lowden to Hoover, June 11, 1936, K-78.

¹¹⁸Hoover to Hamilton, July 14, 1936, K-46, was pleased that the chairman was following the anti-New Deal lines suggested. Eaton, Presidential Timber, 362, notes Knox's denunciatory approach to the New Deal. Hyde to Hoover, July 13, 1936, K-61, noted Hamilton's approach. In the New York Times, September 24, 1936, columnist Arthur Krock thought that the Republicans had given FDR his best issue: Hoover and the depression.

¹¹⁹Rauch, New Deal, 260. Donald Bruce Johnson, The Republican Party and Wendell Wilkie (Urbana, 1960), 9, spoke of a "rather colorless standard bearer."

¹²⁰Eaton, Presidential Timber, 362.

Landon lacked experience, had a vulnerable record, and "was unknown to most people."¹²¹

The Republican nominee isolated Old Guard Republicans and Hooverites during the early weeks of the campaign. Yet, the "specter of Hoover" remained obvious. Landon headquarters feared the ex-President's public appearances as much as a plague.¹²²

William Allen White, recognizing the bleakness of GOP chances, thought that the Governor might "crumble or crystallize" under the pressure. As the nominee was "a decent, square, kindly, courageous" individual, White urged Hoover "to help him all you can."¹²³ The former President continued to hope for "considerable fireworks" in the campaign.¹²⁴

¹²¹James A. Farley, Behind the Ballots (New York, 1938), 305-308. Farley and FDR thought that Landon's weaknesses were so obvious that he would never be nominated. "His flat and uninspired acceptance speech" hastened his downward spiral. Farley notes that Landon's great achievement of balancing the budget was possible because of New Deal loans and works projects. Moreover, many of the Governor's acts were declared unconstitutional by the Kansas courts, thus depriving the GOP of some of the best issues. Too, he was "unacquainted with federal affairs."

¹²²Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 605. Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt, 428. D. R. McCoy, "Alfred M. Landon and the Presidential Campaign of 1936," Mid-America, XLII (October, 1960), 213-214.

¹²³White to Hoover, July 1, 1936, Selected Letters, 365-366.

¹²⁴Hoover Collection, LXIVA (July 5, 1936), Item 2306. Hoover, in Oregon, spoke with the press.

Although Landon and Ogden Mills were convinced "the tide" was running with the Republicans,¹²⁵ Hyde and his Chief were despondent over the political outlook. Confidential Congressional Digest polls showed thirty-one per cent of the Republicans defecting to Roosevelt, while only eight per cent of the Democrats favored Landon.¹²⁶ The ex-President decided that it was time to act. He asked Lewis Strauss to go to Topeka and press Landon for a change in strategy.¹²⁷

Numerous Republicans were agitated at the "tepid campaigner." Even Hamilton was disturbed at the Topeka strategy and thought that the ex-President should take part in the campaign. Hoover, sensitive to the Landonites' embarrassment at his efforts, reiterated that his "purpose in life was to see that the New Deal was put out of Washington," but he refused to campaign without Landon's request.¹²⁸

¹²⁵Mills to Landon, July 2, 1936, and Landon to Mills, July 6, 1936, Box 52, Mills Papers. Landon anticipated victories in the Midwest and farm belt.

¹²⁶Hoover to Hyde, July 9, 1936, K-61. Hoover to Fort, July 9, 1936, K-38. Throughout the campaign O 'Laughlin blasted Landon's timidity and ineptness. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, July 4, July 11, July 18, July 25, and August 29, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. H.H. predicted that the Democrats would carry California by over a million votes. Hooverites were not as realistic as their Chief. Fort saw the East as Landon country and predicted Lemke would poll enough votes on the third-party ticket to give Landon several Midwestern states. Fort to Hoover, July 17, 1936, K-38.

¹²⁷Hoover to Strauss, July 17, 1936, K-130.

¹²⁸Hoover to Shaw, August 18, 1936, and Shaw to Hoover, August 27, 1936, K-119. The Chicagoan assured his Chief of

The nominee's role was superseded in the last months of the campaign by Knox, Hamilton, Hoover, and even Al Smith.¹²⁹ Several Republicans felt that Landon's "double-dealing" and the Hearst endorsement explained his poor showing in the polls.¹³⁰ Arthur Hyde was so infuriated at Landon's posture that he considered a public condemnation of the "platform and the candidate."¹³¹

Hoover tried to bolster GOP morale. He wrote John Hamilton that in spite of the chaotic feeling, progress was notable and that "the organization will begin to jell in September."¹³² At a Republican rally in San Francisco, the ex-President introduced Hamilton. In his introductory remarks, Hoover blasted "New Deal Collectivism" and warned that "the leopard cannot change his spots even when he runs for office."¹³³ Shortly, Hamilton and Knox became more

Hamilton's sincerity in wanting him to campaign. Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 605, 612-618.

¹²⁹Ibid. McCoy, "Landon and the Campaign of 1936," 213-214, noted the deep fragmentation in the campaign and "the personalized speaking campaigns" of those Landon could not control. See Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 616, 618-619, 623-624, and Rauch, New Deal, 238, 260.

¹³⁰Hyde to Hoover, July 13, 1936, K-61. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, July 4, July 11, July 18, and July 25, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. In Landon's defense, Mayer, The Republicans, 436-439, 442-443, says that the Governor was a good strategist, a "superior man," who "concealed his shrewdness."

¹³¹Hyde to Hoover, September 3, 1936, K-61.

¹³²Hoover to Hamilton, August 14, 1936, K-46.

¹³³Hoover Collection, LXIV (August 13, 1936, Item 2308.

aggressive in their campaign. In a most belligerent tone, Knox said, "Today no life insurance policy is secure; no savings account is safe."¹³⁴

Republicans in New England took heart. George Moses, anxious to return to the Senate, wrote the ex-President asking for a public endorsement and letters to influential state leaders.¹³⁵ Ted Joslin reported that New England's November vote would be Republican. In a revealing statement, the former press secretary said: "Opposition to the New Deal, although strong at the top, has not sifted down to the everyday people who work with their hands."¹³⁶

Until September, Landon maintained his containment policy concerning Hoover's participation in the campaign. Landon headquarters in Chicago even snubbed the ex-President in a "chilled reception." Nor did the nominee's failure to mention Hoover in his addresses go unnoticed.¹³⁷

¹³⁴Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 616, 618-619, 623-624. Wolfskill, Revolt of the Conservatives, 205-215, saw Hamilton as more conservative than Landon despite the fact that he was Landon's manager. As Schlesinger notes, even Landon adopted the hard line by October and riddled Roosevelt as directing "the nation down the road to dictatorship."

¹³⁵Moses to Hoover, August 31, 1936, K-95. H.H., pleased that his endorsement was still coveted, readily replied in the affirmative. Hoover to Moses, September, 1936, K-95. Akerson to Hoover, August 31, 1936, K-1, anticipated a Republican sweep in the East.

¹³⁶Joslin to Hoover, September 1, 1936, K-66.

¹³⁷Schlesinger, Politics of Upheaval, 605. Mayer, The Republicans, 442.

After considerable backstage maneuvering and with definite awkwardness, Landon, with obvious reluctance, asked for Hoover's aid in the campaign. The ex-President was eager to help but insisted that Landon inform other Republicans of the request.¹³⁸ On September 4, following the official request, Hoover announced that he would campaign.¹³⁹ He released a barrage of press statements exuding confidence in the Republican nominee and his election chances.¹⁴⁰

Hoover's silence during the following weeks created a certain anxiety in the Landon camp. Actually, the former President was in seclusion, working on his speeches.¹⁴¹ On September 23, he addressed a New York Herald Tribune Forum concerning "The Administration of Relief."¹⁴²

The ex-President stated that the two objectives of relief were to prevent hunger and suffering and to minimize waste and needless sacrifice on the part of those providing relief. He viewed all bureaucratic relief as inefficient,

¹³⁸Landon to Hoover, telephone conversation, September 2, 1936, 12:40 PST time, K-74, and Hoover to Landon, September 2, 1936, K-74.

¹³⁹Hoover Collection, LXIVA (September 4, 1936), Item 2311.

¹⁴⁰Ibid. (September 5, September 6, and September 10, 1936), Items 2312, 2313, 2314.

¹⁴¹Newton to Hoover, September 26, 1936, K-97.

¹⁴²Hoover Collection, LXIVA (September 23, 1936), Item 2317. New York Times, September 24, 1936, 1; Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 186-190.

costly, and political; he also held that relief should be only on an emergency basis.¹⁴³

Hoover stated that local relief agencies were more effective, efficient, inexpensive, and apolitical. Federal relief, he thought, ruined man's "self-respect." Its encouragement of unemployment, to him, was obvious from the growing relief rolls. Aside from the spiritual loss, he noted that infant mortality statistics were the highest in the nation's recent history. He demanded reform and a return to local relief.¹⁴⁴

The ex-President accelerated his tempo towards the close of the campaign. He addressed the Metal Mining Congress at Denver, Colorado, on September 30. The subject of his talk was "Reform in Some Federal Taxes." Although his speech was intended as non-political, he inevitably broached economic issues in his defense of balanced budgets, federal and state powers, and related topics. He upheld "the principle of making people pay according to their means" as right but denounced the use of taxation to "effect social or economic ends."¹⁴⁵

At a convention of GOP women in Pennsylvania, Hoover

¹⁴³Ibid., 186-188.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 188-190. Despite the truth of H.H.'s facts, he ignored the possibility that under the acute circumstances of the depression, infant mortalities would have been even higher but for federal intervention.

¹⁴⁵New York Times, October 1, 1936, 1.

spoke of "New Deal Morals in Arithmetic." His October 16 speech was one of the most vituperative of his career. It evolved around the "intellectual dishonesty" of the Administration. He pointed to FDR's 1932 campaign promises concerning spending, the budget, and recovery. According to Hoover, the Supreme Court had removed the most obvious impediments to recovery: the Roosevelt measures. The President, Hoover said, reminded one of the story about "the old gentleman that was surreptitiously pushed off the dock in order that the hero could gain the plaudits of the crowd as a life saver."¹⁴⁶

The ex-President was amazed at the dishonesty in the New Dealer's bookkeeping. Despite the attempts to cover the truth, he found that expenses in many areas had increased as much as 500 per cent. "If an income taxpayer or any corporation kept books like this administration," he said, "that is if they showed similar morals in juggling their accounts, they would be put in jail." Hoover urged a reduction in expenses and the return of the purse to Congressional control.¹⁴⁷

At Denver, Colorado, on October 30, Hoover, preparing

¹⁴⁶Hoover Collection, LXIVA (October 16, 1936), Item 2322. Vital Speeches, November 2, 1936. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 201-204.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 204-215. H.H. noted the juggling of figures, the mislabeling of expenditures and credits, the transfer of extraordinary regular expenses to the "emergency" column, and other budgetary deceptions.

to deliver his closing campaign address, told the press that Landon was gaining ground every day and would carry New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.¹⁴⁸ Addressing the Young Republican League on "The Challenge to Liberty," Hoover returned to his favorite topic.¹⁴⁹ To a degree, he recaptured "the ideological tone . . . characteristic of his long trek across the stage of American politics."¹⁵⁰

Repeating the importance of the election, Hoover bemoaned the "shadow boxing of political campaigns." To him, the real issue of 1936 was liberty. "The spirit of liberalism," he said, "is to create free men; it is not the regimentation of men." He thought that coercion, centralization, and government dictation were at odds with American liberty. He demanded an end to "economic planning," inefficiency, human suffering, government competition with business, and encroachment on individual rights.¹⁵¹

He called for the restoration of the American System, with its spiritual tone, its freedom from coercion. He doubted that material welfare was enough. "What," he said, "is the nation profited if it shall gain the whole world and lost its own soul?" To him, the time had come to reestablish

¹⁴⁸Hoover Collection, LXIVA (October 30-31, 1936), Items 2323 and 2324.

¹⁴⁹New York Times, October 31, 1936, 1. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 216-227.

¹⁵⁰Moos, The Republicans, 375.

¹⁵¹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 216-222.

truth and morals in public life. To him, the transcendent issue was freedom. He closed by saying: "We must recover these spiritual heritages of America. . . . We shall battle it out until the soul of America is saved."¹⁵²

On November 2, Hoover, made some final remarks about the campaign. He reiterated his belief that the New Deal threatened liberty, that this was the most important political campaign of the century, and that a restoration of the American System was an economic and moral necessity. In a revealing, although unintended, election prognosis, Hoover said: "No matter what comes from this election, . . . we will and must continue to fight."¹⁵³

On November 3, as the ex-President and many of his followers anticipated, Roosevelt swept Landon into oblivion, but "the size of the majority" was incredible. The fact that Republicans had lost almost four million votes since 1932 raised doubts as to the value of a coalition with Jeffersonian Democrats, Liberty Leaguers, and Townsendites. There was much that was "worth contemplation."¹⁵⁴ Many

¹⁵²Ibid., 222-227. Spangler, elated with H.H.'s speeches, said "when the underbrush is cleared away, your message will always live." Spangler to Hoover, November 2, 1936, K-127.

¹⁵³Hoover Collection, LXIVA (November 2, 1936,), Item 2325.

¹⁵⁴Hoover to Reed, November 11, 1936, K-107. Fort to Hoover, November 7, 1936, K-38, blamed Landon's campaign and pointed to H.H.'s greater appeal as a candidate. Moses to Hoover, November 24, 1936, K-95, and Hyde to Hoover, November 21, 1936, K-61, concluded that "the pusil animous Landon" was responsible for the disaster.

Republicans felt that "money was spent as if the crew of drunken sailors from a battleship had it in their pockets." Hooverites thought that the administration had aroused class feeling and used demagogic tactics.¹⁵⁵ Too, they felt that the Landon outfit had ignored principles and the possibility of witnessing "a resurrection; they [sought] only to cast lots for a garment of Republicanism."¹⁵⁶ However, the GOP could take comfort in "the unanimous support of the educated, thoughtful element of our population."¹⁵⁷

Theron K. Bronson, a Connecticut Republican, revealed a great deal of the Republican problem in his post-election analysis. Obsessed with the idea that New England was the "Cradle of Liberty," the intellectual community of the nation, and the most responsible electoral area, Bronson "knew" that Hoover's ideas were popular. All the businessmen and farmers whom he talked to were Hoover Republicans. As men of sobriety, they "always" voted Republican. They were, he said, of the "best New England stock." But in recent elections, he noted, the Irish and especially the Italians

¹⁵⁵Moses to Hoover, November 24, 1936, K-95. Reed to Hoover, November 5, 1936, K-107.

¹⁵⁶Hyde to Hoover, November 21, 1936, K-61. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, November 7, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, bemoaned the failure to defend principle. Hyde to Hamilton, November 4, 1936, K-46, lamented the GOP failure to defend the Hoover Administration. He speculated that such a display of cowardliness led to the 1936 fiasco.

¹⁵⁷Reed to Hoover, November 5, 1936, K-107. Bronson to Hoover, November 5, 1936, K-15.

had swelled the totals of radical candidates in every New England city. "Old time America," he said, was besieged. To him, Roosevelt's "leveling out process" was creating a political revolution. Like Hoover, he "knew" that liberty was endangered. Bronson also blamed Roosevelt for accelerating the "gap between the young people" and their elders. To him, the younger generation did not know the meaning of discipline. He noted that the crime rate in the cities was reaching an alarming proportion. He hoped that Hoover could save the country before it was too late.¹⁵⁸

The Bronson analysis pointed to the significant causes of Roosevelt's overwhelming sweep. Young people were looking for a new ideology as a result of the Depression. They were less concerned with Hoover's abstract principle of American Individualism and its "equality of opportunity." They were impressed with the New Deal's realism in providing job security, guaranteed payments, and government assistance.¹⁵⁹

Businessmen and farmers were no longer a majority even when they combined. Metropolitan pluralities were decisive in every election of the 1930's and 1940's. As Bronson noted, Italians and other ethnic groups were voting Democratic and throwing the urban majorities to FDR and his

¹⁵⁸T. K. Bronson to Hoover, November 5, and November 8, 1936, K-15. Bronson was concerned about good government, political influence, responsible citizens, and morality. He often quoted Hoover's speeches.

¹⁵⁹Adrian and Press, American Political Process, 188.

coalition.¹⁶⁰

The most decisive change in Roosevelt's 1932 and 1936 totals, however, was due to the Negro vote. For the first time in history, a Democratic Presidential nominee garnered a majority of the black vote. Whereas Hoover had polled seventy-one per cent of the Negro vote in 1932, Landon received only thirty-five per cent. A political revolution had occurred in the Negro wards.¹⁶¹

Finally, as one Republican precinct captain observed, by 1936 Roosevelt had "become one of the family." His was a personal victory as far as Negroes, labor, and the so-called middle class were concerned.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰Samuel J. Eldersveld, "The Influence of Metropolitan Party Pluralities in Presidential Elections Since 1920," American Political Science Review, XLIII (December, 1949), 1195-1199. Viorst, Puritan Ethic, 166-169, notes FDR's sweep of Negro, Italian, Jewish, and labor votes.

¹⁶¹Ernest M. Collins, "Cincinnati Negroes and Presidential Politics," Journal of Negro History, XLI (April, 1956), 132-133. Elmer W. Henderson, "Political Changes Among Negroes in Chicago During the Depression," Social Forces, XIX (May, 1941), 538-546. Richard S. Kirkendall, "The Great Depression: Another Watershed in American History?" reprinted in Braeman, Change and Continuity, 170-172. See Degler, Out of Our Past, 396. Despite Negro disappointment with FDR, and their realization that he often played politics at their expense, they saw some improvement, even 200,000 jobs in the CCC. They hoped for even more and therefore supported him in 1936. See John A. Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Negro," Journal of American History, LII (June, 1965), 75-88. Also see Leslie H. Fishel, "The Negro in the New Deal Era," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XLVIII (Winger, 1964), 111-126.

¹⁶²Gosnell, Grass Roots Politics, 132. With the changes in the middle class, the ethnic, racial and urban vote insured FDR's heavy margin of 1936.

With the final tabulations recorded, Republicans were a decimated species. The Hartford Daily Courant described the party as too weak to prevent further centralization and bureaucratization. Its principles were all that the Party had saved. Pointing to the future, however, the newspaper expressed a belief that Republicans could demand "efficiency and a minimum of expense" regarding impending New Deal policies. The reorganization of the government and the extension of civil service were positive goals that the Party might promote.¹⁶³

Lewis Strauss cautioned his Chief's silence as his supporters were the obvious "nucleus around which any reconstruction will have to be made." Hooverites even anticipated Governor Landon asking the ex-President "to assume leadership." Mills was relieved that the Chief had not been the nominee, since the certain defeat, although unavoidable, would have blamed on Hoover personally.¹⁶⁴

Several Republicans feared that Hamilton lacked the broad understanding and political skill necessary for reconstructing the party along acceptable lines. The Chairman had an "intense energy, a somewhat brilliant personality, but a rather superficial grasp of matters." A

¹⁶³Hartford Daily Courant, November 6, 1936.

¹⁶⁴Strauss to Hoover, November 6, 1936, K-130. The New York loyalist thought that "Ogden is truly repentant and very much bewildered." Mills wanted "bygones to be bygones." Mills to Hoover, November 16, 1936, K-92.

reorganization of the Party was the most important issue in the months ahead.¹⁶⁵ Before Hoover would undertake the enormous task of reorganizing the party, he wanted a reconnaissance of the election, the issues, potential leaders, their loyalties, and a mass reaffirmation of principle.

¹⁶⁵Spangler to Hoover, November 21, 1936, K-127. Moses to Hoover, November 24, 1936, K-95, thought "Hamilton should be unhorsed" and could assure Edge's cooperation in that specific endeavor. Hyde to Hoover, November 21, 1936, K-61, urged the Chief to draw up a list of key men in several states who shared their opinions. Through such a skeletal organization, Hyde hoped to rebuild a party of principle.

CHAPTER VII

RECONNAISSANCE

The 1936 election shattered the GOP. As National Chairman John D. M. Hamilton admitted, Republicans had "lost the pulse of the people." The Party must be reorganized and the job would be anything but easy.¹ The greatest question was "who" should lead the revival? Despite his disastrous defeat, the 1936 nominee Alf Landon had a legitimate claim. Hamilton, as National Chairman and a communicant with all the factions, had a theoretical claim. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the Congressional leader of an anti-New Deal coalition of Republicans and Democrats, received much publicity. The ex-President, as the last official spokesman for his party, and the leader of a loyal band of lieutenants, was eager for a return to center stage.² Mutual distrust complicated the problems of the leaders and the reorganization of the party.

Franklin Fort spoke of a "floundering" party, leaderless, and drifting. To the Jerseyite, his Chief was the only

¹Donald Bruce Johnson, The Republican Party and Wendell Willkie (Urbana, 1960), 13. Hereinafter cited as Johnson, Willkie.

²Conrad Joyner, The Republican Dilemma (Tuscon, 1963), 4.

possible leader.³ Hoover, in deep meditation, pondered the appropriate action. He soon decided that there were two alternatives for him. The role of a Cincinnatus had little appeal. However, that of an "evangelist in a world that does not wish to listen" beckoned him. In view of their 1936 blunder, Hoover thought that Republicans should publicly demand his return to the national podium.⁴

As the ex-President reflected on Republican strategy of 1936, he became convinced that Landon tactics were responsible for the loss of every state except Maine and Vermont. Any idiot, he concluded, could see that an aggressive anti-New Deal approach was the only path to a Republican future. Hoover, on the verge of challenging Landon for party control, was convinced that the Kansan was, at best, "a mediocre, prairie politician."⁵

³Fort to Hoover, January 7, 1937, K-38. Hyde to Hoover, January 8, 1937, K-61. The Missourian thought that someone must call back the nation "to her original faith."

⁴Hoover to Norman Beasley, December 29, 1936, K-9. Hoover to Hyde, January 1, 1937, K-61. The two letters were identical in tone and thought. Beasley to Hoover, January 5, 1937, wrote H.H. that "no cause is lost so long as there are those who believe in it enough to fight for it. But to fight they must have a leader . . . a leader from whom they can draw strength and to whom they can give strength." The historian agreed with Hyde that the GOP had only one such man.

⁵Mayer, The Republicans, 448. San Francisco Chronicle, August 24, 1937, expressed anger over the fiasco brought about by the "me-tooers." Robinson, Roosevelt Leadership, 191, notes that many New Deal opponents thought that Landon's nomination had muddled the issues. Too, the conservative South had voted for FDR.

For his part, Landon thought of Hoover as "a stuffy egotist and a perpetual Presidential candidate." Undoubtedly, the ex-President and his record were an albatross for Republicans.⁶ The 1936 nominee, however, wanted a closer alliance with anti-New Deal Democrats, and even proved receptive to the idea of a new party.⁷

Aside from the maneuvering of aspirants for the GOP leadership position, the party itself had to choose a direction from four options. Basically, these were again the four possible roads of 1935. Hoover, becoming more and more the voice of conservatives, pointed to an anti-New Deal route which would defend individualism, states rights, conservative fiscal policies such as the gold standard and a balanced budget, and less federal regulation. He wanted a responsible opposition.⁸

⁶Mayer, The Republicans, 448.

⁷Johnson, Willkie, 14-15. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 255-259, notes that the proponents of a coalition party all but won Landon and Vandenberg. The 1936 nominee had even approved of a move to nominate Senator Byrd or another Southern Democrat as his running mate.

⁸Johnson, Willkie, 14. The American Political Science Association, Toward A More Responsible Two-Party System (New York, 1950), made an eloquent plea for ideological parties. It quoted H.H.'s statement that "if a man from the moon, who knew the essentials of representative government came as a total stranger to the United States, he would say some obvious things within the first week or two. . . . He would say that in all this ideological tumult, if there cannot be a reasonably cohesive body of opinion in each major party, you are on a blind road where there is no authority in the ballot or in government."

Progressives demanded a liberal move which would go further leftward than the New Deal. The obvious weakness of such a course was its alienation of many Republicans with their moderate to conservative philosophy. Moreover, Progressives composed a very small faction of the GOP in the 1930's.⁹

A third group preferred to see the Republican Party die and thus free its members to form a new party, hopefully along ideological and economic lines, and with a Southern flavor. Men of diverse views favored this approach. Several Senate leaders including McNary and Vandenberg leaned in this direction, and Landon showed a surprising receptivity to the idea.¹⁰

The GOP, suffering an accelerating fragmentation, chose the fourth option and "muddled along" as a "loyal opposition."¹¹ At the darkest moment in the party's recent history, the President announced his Court Plan. The February 5, proposal amounted to an attempt to pack the court.¹² It gave the Republicans an issue on which to unite,

⁹Johnson, Willkie, 15. New York Times, January 6, January 17, January 31, February 7, March 5, and March 10, 1937, 1, pushed for a liberalization of the party.

¹⁰Johnson, Willkie, 15-16, 26-27. Fortune Magazine, XV (February, 1937), 67-71, argued this line. Also see Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 255, 259-260.

¹¹Johnson, Willkie, 16.

¹²New York Times, February 6, 1937, 1.

albeit in opposition.¹³

On the very day that Roosevelt announced his judiciary maneuver, the ex-President held a press conference. In an unmistakable tone, Hoover attributed the Judiciary Reorganization Bill to the Court's invalidation of "pet" New Deal programs. The President's bias, he held, was undeniable, but the method of bypassing a constitutional amendment and openly attempting to destroy the independence of the court was unpardonable. The proposal, he noted, would subordinate the court "to the personal power of the Executive." To Hoover, this would nullify "the greatest savior of liberty."¹⁴

Several Republicans applauded Hoover's public statement on the Court Plan and thought that he had added strength to the opposition side.¹⁵ The majority of GOP leaders, however, preferred Senator McNary's strategy of silence. To Senate politicians, the defeat of the Roosevelt scheme was possible only if Democrats led the fight against the Court

¹³Johnson, Willkie, 17-19.

¹⁴New York Times, February 6, 1937, 1. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 228.

¹⁵Norman Beasley to Hoover, February 27, 1937, K-9, expressed his and Wendell Willkie's admiration for the ex-President's effort to show Republican character. Theron Bronson to Hoover, February 10, 1937, K-15, thought that sane men must defend constitutional government and principle from FDR's onslaught. O'Laughlin to Hoover, February 22, February 23, February 27, March 6, March 9, March 13, March 20, and March 27, 1937, Box 44, O'Laughlin Papers, showed an obsession with the court plan. Of GOP officeholders, only Governor John Bricker of Ohio endorsed a public repudiation of the President's plan. Bricker to Hoover, February 24, 1937, K-14.

Plan. McNary and Borah converted Vandenberg to their position, thus presenting a solid front on the proper tactic.¹⁶

Congressional leaders, however, had to restrain Landon, Hamilton, and especially Hoover. Arthur Vandenberg held a series of conferences with the ex-President and begged for silence.¹⁷ In the long run McNary's strategy proved victorious as the Democrats divided, the Court Plan was defeated, and Roosevelt was placed on the defensive.¹⁸

Although Hoover reluctantly acquiesced in the McNary policy throughout the spring of 1937, he took one last blow at the packing plan in his Chicago address of February 20. He demanded "Hands Off the Supreme Court." He discussed the widespread concern over the court plan on the part of men from every party, class, and profession. He reiterated his moderate stand between Old Guard and "radical" extremes. Although many men, he said, were urging him to accept the role of "elder statesman," he was not ready for retirement. He did recognize "the era in my life has gone by when party

¹⁶Boskin, "Politics of an Opposition Party," 93-96. James D. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 101-106, 108-110, 331. "Leadership in Congress," Review of Reviews, XCV (January, 1937), 47-51, described McNary as a "shrewd politician."

¹⁷Boskin, "Politics of an Opposition Party," 93-96. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 101-106, 108-110, 107, 331. Also see Mayer, The Republicans, 447, for an admission that rank and file Republicans favored an aggressive denunciation of the Court Plan.

¹⁸Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 105-106, 331.

aspects of such an issue concern me." But he spoke, he said, as an American concerned with the threat to liberty, and far removed from any political thoughts.¹⁹ Hoover, as usual, was claiming an apolitical posture, whatever the reality.

Hoover denied that the Supreme Court was behind in its work. He pointed to the historical precedent which allowed John Marshall and Oliver Wendell Holmes to serve the nation long after their seventieth birthdays. He denied partisanship on the part of the Court, and pointed to its unanimous decisions on the "greater issues" such as the NRA.²⁰

The ex-President accused Roosevelt of trying to revolutionize the constitution and abolish an independent judiciary. No executive, he said, had ever asked for such a blank check. He questioned the need for a court of "President's judges." To him, such a proposal violated logic, rights, and the Constitution. He urged the maintenance of an independent judiciary.²¹

Despite the ex-President's assured public silence, he continued to maneuver backstage regarding the Court Plan. At the least, he encouraged O 'Laughlin to undercut Roosevelt by bringing about the resignation of a liberal judge. In the past, James Clark McReynolds, one of the most conservative judges on the Supreme Court, had shown an admiration

¹⁹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 229-230.

²⁰Ibid., 230-232.

²¹Ibid., 232-236.

for Hoover. O 'Laughlin approached McReynolds and persuaded him to ask Chief Justice Hughes to encourage the retirement of Judge Louis Brandeis. Although McReynolds complied with the request, Judge Brandeis enjoyed good health and decided to remain on the bench.²² Since "everyone" knew that Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, notwithstanding his conservatism, had been assured the next vacancy, the embarrassment to the President could have been considerable.²³

With Hoover's hearty approval, Ben S. Allen helped organize a League for Supreme Court Independence. Financial support was easily found and the organization rapidly expanded.²⁴ Another group, the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, proved to be the most effective propaganda agency in the Court fight. Publisher Frank Gannett, editor Edward Rumley, and the "political pamphleteer" Amos Pinchot were the buiding lights of this organization. They distributed a pamphlet entitled The Assault on the Supreme Court. They made a positive contribution to the

²²Hoover to O 'Laughlin, February 26, 1937, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, reiterated that "everyone" wanted a public denunciation of FDR's court-packing plan. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, February 22, February 23, February 27, 1937, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers, dealt with the McReynolds efforts and the court plan in general.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Allen to Hoover, April 5, 1937, K-2.

President's setback.²⁵ Walter Lippmann, the widely read columnist, condemned the President's lack of respect for the Constitution and questioned the basic integrity of the Administration as well as its political wisdom in proposing the Court Plan.²⁶

As opposition to Court-packing accelerated, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary held extensive hearings on the Reorganization Bill. Although the ex-President did not go before the Committee, his views were represented in the testimony of economist John Flynn. The embittered New Deal critic lamented the challenges to liberty manifested in the attempt to destroy judicial independence.²⁷ In a similar vein, Ogden Mills published his book, The Seventeen Million, which noted the "menace of collectivism" and its "ever-lengthening shadow." Individual freedom was dying as the government became master of the people.²⁸

Although the ex-President was concerned with the Court Plan and its repudiation, he devoted much energy to pure

²⁵Richard Polenberg, "The National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, 1937-1941," Journal of American History, LII (December, 1965), 582-598. These men, Polenberg said, hoped that the GOP was dead since they despised H.H. as "a fool . . . always misinformed."

²⁶New York Herald Tribune, March 25, 1937, 1.

²⁷U. S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 75 Cong., 1 Sess., Hearings: Reorganization of the Federal Judiciary (Washington, 1937), 915-924, 22-23.

²⁸Ogden Mills, The Seventeen Million (New York, 1937), 1-16, 142-143.

politics. His lieutenants kept him informed of local political developments, divisions, strife, opportunities, and relative matters.²⁹ At an early date, Hoover conceived the idea of a Republican Conference to discuss leadership, principles, and the future. He asked his close friend Ray Wilbur to discuss the plan with William Allen White. The Kansas editor thought that it was too soon to reassemble the discordant and fragmented party.³⁰

Hoover, ignoring the leaders' rebuffs, turned to a grass-roots campaign and wrote hundreds of letters to local leaders urging a committee to discuss the Party's future and to enunciate Republican principles.³¹ If a Republican

²⁹Crowther to Hoover, January 21, 1937, K-25, discussed New Hampshire political trends. O 'Laughlin to Hoover, March 27, April 3, April 12, 1936, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. Ben S. Allen to Hoover, April 5, 1937, K-2.

³⁰White to Wilbur, January 29, 1937, K-148. This letter underlined the true authorship of the plan and disclosed its early conception as well as its promoter's eagerness for the titular leadership of his party.

³¹Mayer, The Republicans, 448, 453, notes Landon's determination to thwart a Hoover comeback. Despite the charges of a power bid, H.H.'s primary concern, according to Johnson, Willkie, 20, was for a "statement of principles." H.H. hoped that a conference of leaders would call for a national convention and noted the 1919 historical precedent in which Will Hays and Ogden Mills had drafted a set of principles to which Republicans had rallied, prior to the 1920 election. Hoover to Hamilton, confidential letter, April 15, and April 23, 1937, K-46, admitted that he had written thirty leaders concerning a declaration of principles. H.H. intended to let a separate council discuss specific policies. He wanted the party to endorse his principles. He thought that the Grass Roots Conventions of 1934 had developed to the point that a party conference was not feasible. He feared that the two-party system would end if the GOP did not take a positive action at once.

politico proved amiable, Hoover's correspondence with him accelerated.³²

The ex-President wanted other GOP leaders to openly push for a party conference. He was disappointed at Governor Landon's failure to cooperate.³³ Hyde, on his Chief's behalf, pressed Senator Dickinson to move for a declaration of party principles through a conference of GOP leaders. Although the Iowan approved the general idea, he feared any personalized attempt by Hoover, Borah, or Mills to reorganize the Party. In vain, Hyde tried to convince Dickinson that Hoover alone had the leadership qualities, the principles, and the press coverage necessary for Republican revival. Hyde even thought that the public should demand Hoover's return to politics.³⁴ Crowther reported that New Hampshire politicians were anxious for a declaration of principles and were waiting for leadership.³⁵

The ex-President, at last, recognized that his personal intervention was necessary. Consequently, he called on Governor Lowden at "Sinnissippi." Both men expressed

³²Hoover to Governor John Bricker, March to November, 1937, K-14. Hoover to Governor Wilbur Brucker, June to November, 1937, K-14.

³³Hoover to Bricker, March 12, 1937, K-14, urged the Ohioan to aid in the move. Hoover to Hamilton, April 23, 1937, L-128, MacChesney Papers.

³⁴Dickinson to Hyde, May 7, 1937, and Hyde to Dickinson, May 10, 1937, K-29, reflected agreement on principles but a difference on leadership.

³⁵Crowther to Hoover, May 22, 1937, K-25.

alarm at the hostility between the Hoover and Landon camps. The Illinoisian also agreed to support the idea of a party conference.³⁶

By late spring, Hooverites were confident of a partial victory in the Court Plan fight. The Hughes letter to Senator Burton K. Wheeler had pointed up the efficiency of the tribunal and undermined one of FDR's main arguments for reorganization. Yet, O 'Laughlin and others feared that the President would agree to a compromise proposal of some type.³⁷ Justice Van Devanter's resignation, as well as the decision upholding the Wagner Act, dispelled the half-hearted support for the President's plan. Hooverites rejoiced at the outcome.³⁸

Before the Court fight faded into the background, Hoover renewed his efforts to evoke a party conference.

³⁶Hutchinson, Lowden, II, 724.

³⁷O 'Laughlin to Hoover, April 3, and April 12, 1937, Box 44, O 'Laughlin Papers. George H. Haynes, The Senate of the United States (Boston, 1938), I, 1097-1100. Robert S. Allen, "Hughes Checkmates the President," Nation, CXLIV (May 20, 1937), 610-611. O. R. Altman, "First Session of the Seventy-fifth Congress," American Political Science Review, XXXI (December, 1937), 1085-1088. Hoover Papers, Q-223, contains hundreds of articles, letters, and notes on the court plan, its repudiation, and related materials.

³⁸Ibid. Robert S. Allen, "Hughes Checkmates the President," Nation, CXLIV (May 20, 1937), 610-611. Robert S. Allen, "Roosevelt Fights Back," Nation, CXLV (August 28, 1937), 187-188, sees FDR as the victor in the Court fight because of the court's subsequent decisions on the New Deal. FDR, he says, suffered defeat only through the palace revolution which split his party. Hoover to MacChesney, June 1, 1937, C-15, MacChesney Papers, shows relief that the plan was defeated.

Aware of Governor Bricker's enthusiasm for the idea, the ex-President expressed desire for a Bricker-Lowden-Landon-Vandenberg conference to discuss reorganization. Again the Ohio Governor agreed to cooperate.³⁹ Hoover, already agitated at the constant "chatter" about a GOP corpse, became incensed at the press charge that he was promoting the conference. It was, he said, a grass roots idea which many leaders favored.⁴⁰

Arthur Hyde, perturbed at "the masterminds of Kansas" and their rejection of a Hoover comeback, took to the road and urged Republicans to draft the ex-President as their leader and reorganizer. Hyde reiterated his belief that Hoover alone has the "intellectual and spiritual leadership" necessary for a revival of the party.⁴¹ Despite Hyde's efforts, the old "inner circle" was dissolving. On June 20, Jerseyite Franklin Fort died of cancer.⁴² Four months later, Ogden Mills also died.⁴³

³⁹Bricker to Hoover, June 1, 1937, K-14. Hoover to Bricker, June 21, and Bricker to Hoover, June 28, 1937, K-14.

⁴⁰Hoover to Spangler, June 24, 1937, K-127.

⁴¹Hyde to Hoover, June 14, 1937, K-61, blasted the "liberalizers, compromisers, wobblers and defeatists" of the Party. New York Times, June 27, 1937, 1. George Akerson to Hoover, August 18, 1937, K-1, thought that the Chief was "the only one in the country, on the horizon, who can furnish the leadership." Ashmun Brown to Hoover, August 23, 1937, K-16, saw Hoover as "a guide to clear thinking."

⁴²Hoover to Mrs. Frank Fort, telegram, June 21, 1937, K-38, lamented the passing of "our greatest friend."

⁴³New York Times, October 12, 1937, 1.

At Charles Dawes' request, Hoover agreed to meet with a "number of state political heads" in the Northwest during August.⁴⁴ Hyde soon reported that the Young Republican Clubs were determined to witness a declaration of principles. They were, he said, "the only group that can save America."⁴⁵

Hoover continued to make forays into enemy country in an effort to win converts to his idea of a party conference. At Buffalo, Wyoming, in early August, the ex-President admitted that he had "heard of a proposed 1938 rally of Republican Party leaders" but denied knowledge of its confirmation.⁴⁶ A week later, he denied any attempt to bypass Governor Landon and Chairman Hamilton. He noted that the Chairman had suggested the idea of a party conference to the Executive Committee and that numerous state leaders were urging a Party Convention.⁴⁷

Spangler, looking toward the September meeting of the Executive Committee, agreed to press for the convention and expected Earl Warren and Ralph Williams to support his

⁴⁴Hoover to Dawes, July 22, 1937, K-25.

⁴⁵Hyde to Hoover, July 10, 1937, K-61.

⁴⁶Hoover Collection, LXV (August 10, 1937), Item 2368.

⁴⁷New York Times, August 21, 1937, 1. Hoover to Spangler, August 21, 1937, K-127, could not understand Hamilton's disavowal. Lowden had arranged a Landon-Hoover parley at Sinnissippi.

efforts.⁴⁸ Governor Bricker and Ohio State Chairman Ed Schorr were drumming up support, too.⁴⁹ Western leaders were anxious for an aggressive organization, and Jacob Allen, a Grass Roots founder from Chicago, thought that Hoover's idea of a declaration of principles was a brilliant suggestion.⁵⁰

The New York Herald Tribune leaked Hoover's Conference efforts in August. It failed to credit other leaders with authorship or support of the idea. The ex-President was greatly embarrassed and feared that personalization of the idea might jeopardize its chances.⁵¹ Hoover, obviously aware of his precarious position in the party, knew that opposition to the plan would accelerate if it was credited as his idea.

Hoover's future hopes now rested on the National

⁴⁸Spangler to Hoover, August 25, 1937, K-127, discussed the coming Executive Committee session. Hoover to Spangler, August 28, 1937, K-127, reaffirmed the support of Warren and Williams.

⁴⁹Bricker to Hoover, August 30, 1937, K-14.

⁵⁰Hoover to Bricker, August 24, 1937, K-14. Jacob Allen to MacChesney, August 30, 1937, C-13, MacChesney Papers. Hoover to Wilbur Brucker, August 24, 1937, K-16, hoped that the Michigan Governor could sway state party leaders to the idea. He admitted that he had avoided a conference with Vandenberg but still hoped all the party leaders would support the conference. Vandenberg's attempts to curry favor with anti-New Deal Democrats, according to Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, 259, 253, 200-210, had raised doubts in some quarters as to his Republican steadfastness.

⁵¹Hoover to Brucker, August 24, 1937, K-16. Hoover to Bricker, August 24, 1937, K-14.

Committee's issuing a call for a general conference. He accepted the necessity of a broad base including the Young Republicans, delegates to the 1936 Convention, state chairmen, and candidates for office. Significantly, he was not concerned about the inclusion of the Congressional leaders.⁵² He recognized that the "wobblers" would be of little aid in drafting a declaration of principles. To him, the party needed intellectual inspiration, not more opportunism.⁵³

Following a conference with Paul Saxon, a Hoover secretary, Chairman Hamilton informed the ex-President that everything was clear. The Executive Committee would meet on September 23. A Hearst minion, he said, had broken the story about Hoover's authorship of the Conference plan. Hamilton had refused to comment in order to prevent charges of disloyalty from the Landon camp.⁵⁴

Governor Brucker of Michigan reported enthusiasm for the conference. He thought that the public was waiting "for the kind of leadership" Hoover could exert.⁵⁵ Spangler and

⁵²Hoover to A. Brown, August 28, 1937, K-16.

⁵³Ibid. American Political Science Association, Toward A More Responsible Two-Party System, 41, 69, quotes H.H.'s belief that ideological parties were needed, for "if there cannot be a reasonably cohesive body of opinion in each major party, you are on a blind road where there is no authority in the ballot or in government."

⁵⁴Hamilton to Hoover, September 2, 1937, K-46.

⁵⁵Brucker to Hoover, September 3, 1937, K-16.

George Ball of Indiana were to meet the ex-President in Chicago prior to the Executive Committee conclave.⁵⁶ Hoover's hopes improved to the point that he wrote Knox that rank and file Republicans were demanding a party conference. He urged the Chicagoan to aid in drafting a declaration of principles.⁵⁷

Throughout 1937, the ex-President continued to dabble in local politics. He worked with Earl Warren in promoting Hooverish Republicans in the California party, and advised the national committee man concerning the party conference and related matters. Hoover and Warren enjoyed the wholehearted support of Justus Cramer, the chairman of the California Republican Central Committee.⁵⁸

Hoover also continued to assert his leadership on the national level. In September, he published an article on "The Crisis and the Political Parties" in the Atlantic Monthly. Hoover reiterated his belief in the need for ideological parties and a strong two-party system. A party out of office, he said, must always provide alternatives and

⁵⁶Spangler to Hoover, September 2, and September 15, 1937, K-127.

⁵⁷Hoover to Knox, September 13, 1937, K-72.

⁵⁸Warren to Hoover, September 20, October 6, and October 13, 1937, K-145. Cramer to Hoover, June 11, September 9, and October 28, 1937, K-24. Cramer generally discussed the intricate details of California politics.

play the "loyal opposition."⁵⁹

The ex-President lamented the abridgement of liberty, the increased federal direction and coercion, the patronage, excessive spending, and the attempts to undermine the checks and balances of a three-branch government. The New Deal, he said, "like all drugs, required increasing doses."⁶⁰

To Hoover, the worst aspect of the New Deal was its economic policy which led to "price fixing, wage fixing, managed production in farm and shop, managed currency, managed credit, managed interest" and coercion. The American spirit of enterprise was in eclipse. He cited a long list of economic ills.⁶¹

Hoover charged 1936 campaigners with blurring issues; parroting Roosevelt; and using outmoded labels such as reactionary, conservative, and liberal which were now inapplicable, intellectually dishonest, and defaming. He noted that both parties had an Old Guard and a lunatic fringe. It was time, he said, to concentrate on issues and ignore personalizations.⁶² He charged New Dealers with abetting "vicious political machines," currying favor with public money, and using corporate and union funds for campaigns.⁶³

Hoover noted the GOP's opportunity for a revival of

⁵⁹Herbert Hoover, "The Crisis and the Political Parties," Atlantic Monthly, CLX (September, 1937), 257-258.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., 59-60.

⁶²Ibid., 260-264.

⁶³Ibid.

their organization. The fidelity of some Party members, he said, "is second only to their religion." He thought that Republicans should defend their record and reassert their principles. Although there was talk of a new third party through a realignment, such a move, to him, would be "slow and difficult." He used historical examples to prove the improbability of success. Time, he said, was too precious to encourage a continuation of the New Deal by splitting the opposition. He doubted that many Republicans would ever leave their party with its history and its commendable record.⁶⁴

Hoover wanted the party to enunciate its principles and let the chips fall where they might. He proposed a creed: "I believe," he said, in liberty, the bill of rights, economic freedom, a balanced budget, equality of opportunity, and other traditional principles. His creed was individual but he hoped that the party would convene and draw up a platform of principles which would rouse the public to a defense of liberty.⁶⁵

Confident that the party could not resist his proposal much longer, the ex-President traveled to Sinnissippi for a meeting with Lowden and Landon. The three men reached accord on a Republican Conference and the need for a broad base in determining the delegates. They also consented to the National Committee's creation of a "committee to draft a

⁶⁴Ibid., 264-266.

⁶⁵Ibid., 266-267.

declaration of fundamental principles." In turn the draft would be submitted to a spring conference of party leaders.⁶⁶

Following the Sinnissippi conclave, Hoover spoke with Knox and pushed for a "positive, courageous" declaration "free from personal politics." Despite Hoover's request, Vandenberg declined to serve on the Committee because of Congressional opposition.⁶⁷ The ex-President was chagrined at Landon's demand for Congressional inclusion.⁶⁸ Although reports circulated of Landon's encouragement of Congressional rejection, the Kansan wrote Senator John Townsend of Delaware and urged Congressional participation on the basis that they would have to run on the platform adopted.⁶⁹

Several newspaper columnists interpreted the Hoover push for a party conference as the best indicator that he

⁶⁶Hutchinson, Lowden, II, 724-725. The ex-Governor saw through the surface amiability of H.H. and Landon, and recognized that they misunderstood each other on several points. The basic difference concerned the composition of the conference. H.H. wanted National Committee figures to dominate, whereas Landon favored the Congressional leaders. Too, Landon wanted specific policy proposals, whereas H.H. wanted a declaration of principles. H.H. conceded the latter point after much suasion by Vandenberg. Hoover to Hamilton, September 14, 1937, K-46, exaggerated Lowden's enthusiasm for the convention. Hoover to Hamilton, October 5, 1937, K-46, was a key letter explaining H.H.'s views of the Sinnissippi conclave.

⁶⁷Hoover Collection, LXV (October 4, 1937), Item 2378; New York Times, October 5, 1937. Hoover to Spangler, October 7, 1937, K-127, discussed the Hoover-Vandenberg exchange.

⁶⁸Hoover to Lowden, October 8, 1937, K-78.

⁶⁹Landon to Senator Townsend, October 6, 1937, C-15, MacChesney Papers.

was "definitely running for nomination in 1940." The Old Guard, anxious for control of the party machinery, pretended enthusiasm for Hoover's ideas. The various factions were pulling in every direction. The fact that many Committee members would be ousted in 1938 underlined the importance of Hoover's drive while he still controlled the largest personal faction.⁷⁰

While Republicans discussed the pros and cons of a party conference, certain labor leaders approached Hoover regarding a change in tactics concerning Republican labor views. Robert Littler, a San Francisco attorney and frequent defender of labor, noted the increasing dissatisfaction with bureaucrats. The New Deal, he said, was an artificial stimulant which created internal dissention and was fomenting labor's dependency on the federal government. Littler urged a GOP reconciliation with labor.⁷¹ Hoover, intrigued with the possibilities, made several inquiries.

Raymond Bellany, an A.F. of L. representative, assured Hoover that a labor-Republican alliance was possible. Labor leaders, he said, lamented the paternalism of the government. For Hoover's use, Bellany enclosed a list of friendly A.F. of

⁷⁰Hill Blackett to Boake Carter, October 8, 1937, L-128, MacChesney Papers. Blackett estimated that H.H.'s faction comprised less than twenty per cent of the party. Although he failed to define them, Blackett spoke of six major factions.

⁷¹Littler to Hoover, October 13, 1937, PPS 141, Labor.

L. leaders who were loyal to the GOP. Bellamy urged their inclusion in party councils and all well-advertised national functions.⁷²

With the labor situation in mind, Hoover proved increasingly receptive to the idea of specific planks for the party conference. Disturbed over the failure of Landon to communicate with the National Chairman, Hoover accelerated his public activities. He informed the press that Republicans would present a united front concerning the declaration of principles and that they would "reorient the Party to the problems of the times."⁷³

On October 23, Hoover urged a "national crusade." He spoke of an overwhelming public support for a National Convention to enunciate definite policy alternatives to the New Deal. Polls, he said, showed that ninety-four per cent of the Republican rank and file favored a party rally. He hoped that the public would soon have all the facts concerning the New Deal.⁷⁴

⁷²Bellamy to Hoover, October 27, 1937, and Hoover to Bellamy, October 18, 1937, PPS 441, Labor. The Bellamy list included Matthew Woll, Vice-President of the A.F. of L., William Hutchenson, President of the Carpenters and Joiners, and John Coefield, President of the Plumbers Association. Aside from these staunch Republicans, Bellamy included a list of others.

⁷³Hamilton to Hoover, October 14, 1937, K-46. Hoover Collection, LXV (October 19, 1937), Item 2381.

⁷⁴Ibid., 2385. New York Times, September 26, 1937, showed the Spangler poll of 6000 Republicans reflecting a ninety-four per cent endorsement of a party conference.

Three days later, in Boston, the ex-President addressed the Massachusetts Republican Club. He spoke on "A Program of American Ideals." He discussed the role of an opposition party, the need for constructive alternatives, fresh blood, principles and ideas. He lamented the loss of morality in the political profession and repeated his own disinterest in "any public office." He also reaffirmed his devotion to principle.⁷⁵

In urging change in methods to solve current problems, he stated that "Collectivism and Planned Economies never achieve recovery." He doubted that the New Deal could ever raise "real living standards." Revealingly, he noted that the public would join Republicans only "if they know where we are going."⁷⁶

Ben Allen praised the Chief's speech as the "greatest" and "most effective in delivery" of his career. Young Republicans, Allen said, were stirred to the point of refusing to compromise on the idea of a party conference. Allen thought that the Young Republicans would hold their own party conference if the National Committee failed to issue the call.⁷⁷ Ashmun Brown described the Chief's speech as "a gust of fresh air in a night club at 4 a.m." It was, he said, "good to have someone take us out of the intellectual slums in which

⁷⁵Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 264-266.

⁷⁶Ibid., 266-274.

⁷⁷Allen to Hoover, October 28, 1937, K-2.

we have been dwelling so long." He thought that Hoover had shown that honor, decency, and integrity were not entirely archaic words.⁷⁸

Hoover wrote Spangler that the National Committee must call a policy conference.⁷⁹ On November 5, the Republican National Committee sanctioned the creation of a policy committee of one hundred. Lowden was named chairman.⁸⁰ Yet, the victory was tarnished by the rejection of a party convention. The ex-President, making the best of the situation, spoke with the press and lauded the creation of a Committee of 100 as a sound approach to contemporary problems. Its membership, he said, would include every profession and pose unlimited possibilities.⁸¹

⁷⁸A. Brown to Hoover, October 27, 1937, K-16.

⁷⁹Hoover to Spangler, October 29, 1937, K-127. The ex-President insisted that Lowden be named chairman.

⁸⁰Spangler to Richey, November 8, 1937, K-127. Hutchinson, Lowden, II, 726. Lowden's illness negated his active role. Landon's reluctance turned into open opposition. Hamilton to Landon, November 1, 1937, and Hamilton to Hoover, November 2, 1937, K-127. As Hamilton mediated between the two camps, he received two resolutions from H.H. The one calling for a policy committee was adopted, whereas the one calling for a party convention was rejected.

⁸¹Hoover was distressed at Hamilton's inability to sway the National Committee to the idea of a 1938 convention. All H.H.'s opponents ganged up on him in Chicago. Joe Martin, Knox, and the Washington crowd had struck a death blow at his plan. MacChesney noted that H.H. "tapped every political, financial and industrial mogul who was under obligation to him in any way" and might have won with a disavowal of his 1940 candidacy. Landon, still a rival for the titular leadership of the party, joined in the narrow defeat of the ex-President. MacChesney memo, PPS, 163, MacChesney

Although Hoover won a partial victory in the creation of a Committee of 100, he remained unhappy at Congressional opposition. In a series of exchanges with Spanger, he discussed the possible selections for chairman in view of Lowden's continued illness. With Lowden out of the picture, Hoover had no strong preference for the post. He vetoed any selection of Knox but thought that ex-Senator Otis Glenn of

Papers. (The authorship of the memo is speculative, but it is objective enough that it came from an insider who recognized the reality and who sympathized with H.H. but not to an extreme point. Johnson, Willkie, 20-22, credited Landon, Knox, and Borah with the defeat of H.H.'s plan. They forced a compromise in the form of the Committee of 100. It should be noted, however, that H.H. retained control of the membership because of his influence with the Executive Committee which would appoint all members. Spangler, a most loyal lieutenant, ran the Executive Committee. For his own view, Hoover to Spangler, December 2, 1937, K-127, lamented the "general conspiracy" fanned by Landon, Knox and Martin, which prevented the policy conference. H.H. was confident that Creager and Spangler could overcome the obstacles in their creation of the Committee of 100. Its membership, he assumed, would include men of ideas. Joseph Boskin, "Politics of an Opposition Party," 228-230, showed H.H.'s strength within the party hierarchy. Knox, on November 5, 1937, wrote that the "party is in danger of being Hooverized." He recognized that H.H. controlled sixty of the 100 committee members. Boskin's study underlined what contemporary Republicans knew so well: Hoover, despite his 1932 defeat and depression image, remained a formidable force in the party and a definite political threat. See Hamilton to Hoover, November 2, 1937, and Hamilton to Landon, November 1, 1937, K-127, for the difficulty in working with both camps concerning party resolutions.

Illinois would be a wise choice.⁸²

On November 8, at Waterville, Maine, Hoover spoke on "Free Speech and Free Press." He cited several historical examples in which dictators had organized propaganda machines to color the news, discredit the previous regime, promise new panaceas, foment hate, and violate liberty. He warned of a controlled press in America and urged a tenacious defense of free speech and a free press.⁸³

Four days later, at Syracuse University, Hoover spoke on "Training for Public Service." He noted that "the major purposes of our universities outside of football" were "to train minds and strengthen character." He applauded the training for public service but warned that the spoils system was destroying the chance for public service. He cited recent proposals for abolishing the Civil Service Commission and warned that partisan politics was incompatible with public service. He urged the young to accept

⁸²Congressman Joe Martin ignored public opinion and encouraged Congressional opposition to the party conference according to Spangler. Spangler to Hoover, November 3, 1937, K-127. Hoover to Spangler, November 6, and November 11, 1937, and Spangler to Richey, November 8, 1937, K-127. The Hoover-Knox split concerning the party conference and its implications for Hoover's future was amplified in the personal exchanges between the two men. Hoover to Knox, November 6, 1937, expressed disgust with Knox's misrepresentations. Knox to Hoover, November 9, 1937, K-72, stated that "everyone" believed the ex-President wanted a National Convention as his lieutenants fought for it to the last minute. Knox expressed innocence as far as some of H.H.'s charges were concerned.

⁸³Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 276-278.

the duties of citizenship as well as its opportunities.⁸⁴

By the end of the month, Spangler asked for the Chief's recommendation of a Negro, and of labor and agricultural leaders for the Committee of 100.⁸⁵ Hoover suggested the appointment of "Dr. Moton or his successor at Tuskegee" to represent the Negro community.⁸⁶ Hoover also asked for the inclusion of Samuel Crowther of New Hampshire on the list and noted the availability of Glenn Frank as a possible Chairman.⁸⁷

A week later, the ex-President sent Spangler a list of "the backbone of the committee." Hoover regretted Lowden's inability to serve as chairman. He reiterated the importance of seeing that the "right men" served on the Committee.⁸⁸

On December 16, Hoover addressed the Chicago Economic

⁸⁴Hoover Collection, LXV (November 12, 1937), Item 2392. Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 281-286.

⁸⁵Spangler to Hoover, November 23, 1937, K-127, thought a Negro's appointment would "inspire confidence in the colored race." Spangler to Hoover, November 29, 1937, K-127.

⁸⁶Hoover to Spangler, November 25, and December 2, 1937, K-127. According to one observer, "Dr. Moton was on more intimate terms with Herbert Hoover than was any other colored citizen--more intimate, in fact, than many outstanding whites." Claude A. Barnette, "A Southern Statesman," in William Hardin Hughes and Frederick D. Patterson (eds.), Robert Russa Moton of Hampton and Tuskegee (Chapel Hill, 1956), 200. H.H. corresponded with Moton from 1925 onward. For example, see Hoover to Moton, January 23, 1925, 1-1208, Hoover Papers.

⁸⁷Hoover to Spangler, November 25, and December 2, 1937, K-127.

⁸⁸Hoover to Spangler, December 9, 1937, K-127.

Club on "Economic Security and the Present Situation." He doubted that economic security was possible with future opportunity. Fear, anxiety, and insecurity, he said, were the trademarks of the 1930's. To Hoover, talk of a recession might soften the pain of reality, but it would not cure the problem. Industry had stagnated, home construction had halted, the planned economy had spread confusion, and the government was competing with business.⁸⁹ Hoover lamented the debasement of currency, the repudiation of debts, the abandonment of the gold standard, the acceleration of inflation, and the "obvious violation of common sense." He said that the American System was the only sound economic approach and that history had proven its contribution, despite minor abuses and weaknesses.⁹⁰ He called for a reform in methods, a new attention to labor problems, and the cooperation among all interest groups. He accepted the idea of collective bargaining and hoped that labor recognized its responsibilities as well as its rights. He insisted on greater protection of small wage earners. To him, all true standards of conduct emanated "from the sermon on the Mount." The time, he said, had come to heal differences and cooperate for the betterment of all men.⁹¹

Ashmun Brown reported an increasing "Hoover sentiment"

⁸⁹Hoover, Addresses on the Road, 287-290.

⁹⁰Ibid., 290-294.

⁹¹Ibid., 294-299.

as a result of the Chief's recent oratorical efforts.⁹² Hoover, gravely concerned over Brown's declining health, urged the editor to take care of himself, for "such good soldiers" as Brown were scarce.⁹³

As 1937 drew to a close, the ex-President was acutely aware of his deteriorating political position. His bid for party leadership had fallen flat although the Committee of 100 might salvage part of his reputation and principles. Age, death, and political defeat, were taking toll on his political influence. Walter Brown and Alan Fox had lost their positions of power. Ogden Mills and Franklin Fort were dead. Age and illness crippled Dawes, Lowden, and Ashmun Brown. Aside from Spangler and Hyde, the Chief's main support was in his California fiefdom where Earl Warren was in the saddle. Vandenberg, despite his renewed efforts against the New Deal, remained unreliable. 1938 was uncertain. The ex-President began to think that the Committee of 100 held the card to his political future.

⁹²A. Brown to Hoover, December 20, 1937, K-16.

⁹³Hoover to A. Brown, December 29, 1937, K-16.

CHAPTER VIII

A MIXED VERDICT

Republicans of all factions were determined to alter their party's image and to revitalize the organization during 1938. Glenn Saxon, a professor of economics, served as Director of the Research and Editorial Division of the party. He analyzed topics, collected statistics, and with the aid of other researchers suggested party proposals. Under Chairman Hamilton's direction, the national headquarters published the Republican Reporter and a propaganda pamphlet entitled Promise and Performance. Both works were partisan.¹

By January, 1938, the Program Committee crystallized. Dr. Glenn Frank, a former President of the University of Wisconsin, was named Chairman. Although his selection provided little political glamour, he enjoyed the support of several factions. For his own part, Frank promised that the Committee would make an honest audit of New Deal policies, restate Republican philosophy as it related to contemporary

¹C. A. H. Thomson, "Research and the Republican Party," Public Opinion Quarterly, III (April, 1939), 306-313.

problems, and suggest a comprehensive program.²

On January 5, Hoover accepted a seat on the Republican Program Committee.³ Its membership embraced a diversity of opinion. Laborites, business leaders, lawyers, newspapermen, politicians, ethnic and racial minorities, liberals and conservatives served.⁴ Within two months, rumors circulated that a compromise platform had been accepted. Although voluntarism and individual initiative were praised, and responsible government demanded, the Committee endorsed government action in numerous areas. Although many writers noted a "liberal" tone and a rejection of Hooverism in the Committee's proposals, liberal Congressmen, significantly, delayed its publication until long after the November election.⁵

Reports continued to circulate that Hoover was attempting a 1940 comeback. Columnist Roger Babson charged the ex-President with seeking an illusive goal. He thought that Hoover should be satisfied with the vindication already received "from thinking people." Any effort to regain the

²Johnson, Willkie, 22-25.

³Hoover Collection, LXVI (January 5, 1938), Item 2404.

⁴Ronald Bridges, "The Republican Program Committee," Public Opinion Quarterly, III (April, 1939), 299-305. Johnson, Willkie, 22-25.

⁵Ibid.; Bridges, "The Republican Program Committee," Public Opinion Quarterly, III (April, 1939), 299-305.

presidency, he said, was doomed.⁶

Landonites, confident that Hamilton had defected to the ex-President's camp, urged a change in the chairmanship. They promoted Governor Kohler of Wisconsin for the job.⁷ The National Chairman, aware of the pot-shots from his Kansas colleagues, was equally dismayed at the attacks from the conservative wing of the party. Hamilton, ever trying to steer a middle course between the various factions, was growing weary at the constant attacks on himself. To Hoover, he wrote, "I have battled the intrigues of the man who[m] I nominated as President of the United States and of Colonel Knox. I cannot fight you too and have no desire to do so." He pleaded for Hoover's acquiescence concerning the appointment of Franklyn Waltman as Director of Publicity. He realized that Waltman had attacked both of them in the past but contended that the reporter's anti-New Deal bias could prove an asset to the party. Attempting to sweeten the bitter pill, Hamilton noted Landon's opposition to Waltman's

⁶"Babson's Confidential Forecasts," March 28, 1938, K-130.

⁷Johnson, Willkie, 25-27. O'Laughlin to Hoover, December 13, 1937, Box 44, O'Laughlin Papers, had warned H.H. that Landon, Knox, and Vandenberg were trying to take over the party organization and were pushing for a new chairman and the emasculation of the national committee.

appointment.⁸

Speaking to the San Francisco press, Hoover blasted Roosevelt's reorganization bill as a "power grab." It would mean, he said, "the reintroduction of the spoils system" and would give executives control of the civil service. On the following day he spoke of "The Challenge to Liberty." His greatest concern remained a "planned economy."⁹

Although Hoover's attention focused more and more on foreign policy in 1938 and afterward, he remained attuned to local political developments and even courted the favor of certain state governors. The ex-President particularly tried to develop close ties with Michigan's Wilbur Brucker. The Governor, independent of the Vandenberg mantle, continually expressed admiration for Hoover's efforts to revive the Republican Party.¹⁰

On May 15, in Oklahoma City, Hoover enunciated an eleven-point program for recovery. It embraced his traditional ideas of a balanced budget, deflation, reduction of

⁸Hamilton to Hoover, April 2, 1938, and April 9, 1938, K-147. Hamilton sent a portfolio of information on Waltman to H.H. and continued to hope H.H.'s opposition was dissolving. Hamilton disclosed some backstage maneuvers by Landon to force a change in the chairmanship. Hamilton to Hoover, June 29, 1938, K-147.

⁹Hoover Collection, LXVI (April 7, 1938), clipping from the San Francisco News. Article, Newsweek, XI (April 11, 1938), 11.

¹⁰Brucker to Hoover correspondence, 1937-1938, K-16. Of special interest, see Brucker to Hoover, April 30, 1938, and Hoover to Brucker, May 4, and May 9, 1938, K-16. Hoover even invited Brucker to Palo Alto for a visit.

relief, and his usual assortment of remedies. Concerning the forthcoming November election, he predicted Republicans would gain seventy-five Congressional seats.¹¹

By the summer of 1938, Republicans, gaining confidence in their November chances, perceived a certain uneasiness in the Democratic camp. Aside from the President's attempts to purge his own party of its conservative congressmen, the federal government accelerated its PWA and WPA activities on the economic as well as the political front. Lester Dickinson, attempting a senatorial comeback in Iowa, expressed amazement at the new six million dollar PWA allocation for Iowa which, he said, was recovering as rapidly as any of the farm states.¹²

To many men, the worst example of federal intervention in a state election was in Kentucky. According to one astute political observer, Roosevelt, anxious for the reelection of his Senate Majority Leader, Alben Barkley, exploited WPA funds and workers to an unprecedented extent in securing Barkley's renomination in a tight primary fight. More than any other case, Kentucky, he said, underlined the need for the Hatch Act which would restrict the political activity of federal employees.¹³

¹¹Hoover, Further Addresses, 349-353. Time, XXXI (May 16, 1938), 13. New York Times, May 22, 1938, 1.

¹²Dickinson to Hoover, June 11, and June 23, 1938, K-29.

¹³Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 534-539.

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Despite the many Democratic mistakes, the Republican Party remained so bitterly divided that it was uncertain if it would rally by November. Even in Kansas, Landonites fought several other factions over candidates and issues. John D. M. Hamilton, fresh from a re-endorsement by the National Committee, was anything but upset at the defeat of a Landonite for the Kansas Senatorial nomination.¹⁴

Hyde wrote his Chief that an amazing revelation had occurred at a recent Chicago party. He spoke of a Knox manager, somewhat inebriated, who had informed the gathering that Frank Knox was taking "pot-shots" at the ex-President because they would be leading rivals in 1940. Knox, he said, apparently enjoyed Landon's support and now wanted a Hoover disavowal concerning any future nomination.¹⁵

Hooverites were perturbed at Congressional failure to place new government jobs under the civil service. They noted that the percentage of federal employees under the codes had declined from eighty-one to fifty-seven per cent.¹⁶ Ashmun Brown informed Hoover that Roosevelt would probably succeed in buying enough votes to keep a decisive margin in

¹⁴Hamilton to Hoover, June 29, 1938, K-47, informed the Chief of the Committee's endorsement of his handling of the Chairmanship. Hamilton to Hoover, August 15, 1938, K-47, discussed the factionalism in the Kansas GOP

¹⁵Hyde to Hoover, June 1, 1938, K-61.

¹⁶Literary Digest, July 8, 1938, 5.

the new Congress.¹⁷ Hoover, however, remained optimistic about the party's chances although admitting that economic conditions would greatly effect the totals. Like Brown, he was shocked at public apathy and the lack of indignation at the "moral degeneration and demagogery" evidenced at the national level.¹⁸

In July, Will Irwin, on behalf of Liberty Magazine, interviewed the Chief on "What America Must do Next." Hoover seemed to show a new dimension in his concern over the fourteen million unemployed, the "new depression," and the "rubber-stamp" Congress. To Hoover, it seemed clear that a Republican victory in November was necessary for the nation's future.¹⁹

Republican finances remained short throughout 1938 despite the feverish activities of the national headquarters.²⁰ The ex-President attributed the scarcity of funds to the nomination of so many "me-too" candidates.²¹ Nonetheless, Hoover attempted to search for contributions to the

¹⁷A. Brown to Hoover, July 13, 1938, K-16.

¹⁸Hoover to A. Brown, July 28, 1938, K-16.

¹⁹Will Irwin, "What America Must do Next," Liberty Magazine, July 16, 1938, Hoover Collections, LXVII (unnumbered).

²⁰Hamilton to Hoover, July 21, 1938, K-47.

²¹Hoover to Hamilton, August 27, 1938, K-47.

campaigns of the more attractive candidates.²²

The ex-President displayed a special interest in the efforts of two Hooverish candidates in Montana. John G. Brown, Hoover's Montana leader during the late 1930's, assured his Chief that the election of the two congressional candidates would provide "a foundation for 1940."²³

Hoover, campaigning in Montana in August, urged a radical change in Congressional membership as a necessary step in the restoration of an independent legislature. He predicted that a Republican Congress would regain the traditional powers over the purse, offer responsible legislation, and halt federal bureaucratization.²⁴

Reporter Larry Sullivan researched many issues for Hoover. After analyzing the 1938 primaries, Sullivan asserted that anti-New Deal Democrats posted forty-five per cent of the totals. Many of these voters, he reasoned, were convertible if the Republicans capitalized on New Deal mistakes and flaws.²⁵ The Sullivan report reinforced Hoover's own conclusions.

²²Hoover to John G. Brown, September 14, and October 8, 1938, K-16.

²³Hoover to Brown, September 14, and October 8, 1938, K-16, noted the shortage of funds at the national level and urged the Montana leader to secure more local contributions for the two congressional candidates. J. G. Brown to Hoover, September 16, and September 27, 1938, K-16, reported progress and optimism for November.

²⁴Hoover Collection, LXVI (August 6, 1938), Gallatin Gateway, Montana press comments.

²⁵Sullivan to Hoover, August 13, 1938, K-132.

On September 28, the ex-President spoke in Kansas City concerning "Morals in Government." Hoover, in complete sincerity, announced that it was time "to take the gloves off." He blasted New Dealers for their attitude that "the end justifies the means." He charged them with using a double standard in their political and private morality. For six years, he said, they had practiced "an alphabetical moral: GEEAA--Get Elected Anyhow Anyway." To him, New Dealers had encouraged a systematic degeneration in their creation of over 400,000 political jobs, outside the civil service.²⁶

Hoover scoffed at the idea that the Roosevelt Administration was the first to recognize human misery and seek to alleviate it through public works and relief. Admittedly, he said, it had concentrated all activities in Washington, expanded relief activities during every six months prior to a national election, and made unprecedented use of relief funds and workers in a Kentucky election, but this did not entitle it to two more years at the trough. Never before, he said, had political machines enjoyed so much license.

²⁶Hoover, Further Addresses Upon the American Road, 1938-1940 (New York, 1940), 3-6. Hereinafter cited as Hoover, Further Addresses. As Richard Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 310-325, notes, the old Progressives were deeply disturbed at the New Deal methods--its lack of concern with monopoly and political machines, its neglect of moral tones, its attack on sacrosanct institutions such as the Courts, its very opportunism. Like Hoover, the old Progressives were concerned with such fundamentals as citizenship, conscience, morals, service, and duty.

Never before, he contended, had the national government acted in such dishonesty as to tinker with the currency, abandon the gold standard, repudiate debts, and stir class hatred.²⁷

The ex-President urged the adoption of a positive program which would encourage honest government, re-establish moral methods, localize relief even if federally financed, and end the patronage system. He called for the passage of the Hatch Act which New Dealers, he contended, were emasculating.²⁸

By mid-October, Hoover, enroute to New York, per-chanced on former brains-truster Raymond Moley. While the two men were talking, a steward, recognizing the ex-President, volunteered to tell the latest FDR joke. Hoover, "glowering at [him], rumbled 'I don't like stories about Presidents.'"²⁹ Despite his aversion to jokes about his successor, he continued his aggressive attacks on Roosevelt's policies.

On October 17, the ex-President spoke at Hartford, Connecticut, on "Undermining Representative Government." For the most part, the Hartford speech was a repetition of

²⁷Hoover, Further Addresses, 6-17.

²⁸Hoover, Further Addresses, 17-18. Larry Sullivan wrote H.H. that the Kansas City address gave "back-bone" to the GOP. L. Sullivan to Hoover, September 29, 1938, K-132.

²⁹Moley, After 7 Years, 301.

his "Morals in Government" effort of September. He called the 1938 election a "conflict between two ideas of life." He spoke of a "creeping collectivism that is steadily eating away the vitalities of free enterprise." He reiterated the need for an independent legislature which would check the accelerating executive powers. He warned of "sinister aggressions of personal power," and of the President's efforts to stuff the courts, purge honest men from their jobs if they dissented, and control elections through government doles and employees. Hoover urged the election of an independent Congress if democracy was to be maintained.³⁰

The Hartford speech underlined the fact that Hoover had not deviated from his traditional opinions concerning the depression and recovery. He blamed the planned economy, bureaucracy, and regimentation for the "new" depression following Roosevelt's recovery acts. Again Hoover employed weighted words which evoked strong emotions.³¹ Other Republican leaders followed his line of reasoning. Even Landon, George Aiken, and McNary began using more and more of the Hoover line.³²

Public opinion polls reflected the growing reaction

³⁰Hoover, Further Addresses, 21-37.

³¹Ibid.; Herring, Politics of Democracy, 251-252.

³²Boskin, "Politics of an Opposition Party," 150-153, 173-174. Many GOP leaders attempted to label FDR as a dictator. Their confidence in their attack accelerated as his political mistakes surfaced.

to Washington policies. Fifty-three per cent of the people claimed that they were conservative, forty-seven per cent, liberal.³³ Silas Strawn anticipated the defeat of six or seven "New Delirium" Congressmen in Illinois alone.³⁴

Winding up his campaign activity, the ex-President addressed the Joint Republican Organizations at Spokane, Washington, on November 5. He returned to one of his favorite areas: "The Economic Consequences of the New Deal." He reiterated the need for a restoration of free enterprise, the one alternative to planned economy. Only free men, choosing their calling, acting on their own initiative, and securing the just rewards of their efforts, he maintained, could revitalize the American economy, solve unemployment, and raise living standards. He vigorously defended the American System.³⁵

Again Hoover admitted that limited regulation was necessary, that reform and correction of minor abuses were inevitable. Too, he reiterated his belief that "we do not need to sink the ship just to drown the rats." He praised the American System and its achievements up to 1929. The system, he said, was sound. To him, it only needed minor adjustments. In a revealing moment he stated: "It is

³³Hadley Cantril (ed.), Public Opinion, 1935-1946 (Princeton, 1951), 576.

³⁴S. Strawn to Hoover, October 24, 1938, K-132.

³⁵Hoover, Further Addresses, 38-41.

recognized by every authority that depression was overcome and recovery begun the world over in the early summer of 1932." He continued to believe that America's surge forward had been halted by the election.³⁶

As the ex-President berated Roosevelt's hodgepodge recovery efforts and a multitude of New Deal "sins," he said: "It mixes all the stimulating drinks on the bartender's shelf. This does not make for sobriety." FDR's Court plan, his party purge, and his election tactics had "a faint odor of totalitarian government." Hoover verbally destroyed the New Deal economic policies. Sarcastically, he said, "Santa Claus can reign throughout the year and never pay his bills." Yet, he noted that Europe had recovered while America floundered around with a "planned economy."³⁷

Since to Hoover, New Deal methods, whatever the humanitarian purpose, were faulty, he urged a return to the right road. The prerequisites to real recovery, he said, were the American System, constitutional methods, national morality, and an independent Congress. "Give us the election of a new Congress of independent men," he said, "and watch America come back."³⁸ Ashmun Brown praised his Chief's

³⁶Ibid., 41-43. H.H. was being loose with the facts at this point, for very few men outside his inner circle had accepted the 1932 recovery thesis.

³⁷Hoover, Further Addresses, 43-47.

³⁸Ibid., 48-57. H.H. emphasized that his program would not be a step backward, but a step in the right direction.

address as a superlative effort. To Brown, it showed that sound reasoning and intellect the country so badly needed.³⁹

Republicans were better organized in 1938 than at any election for a decade. Hamilton, as an aggressive Chairman, had assured an analysis of regional opinion. His glove-trotting tours had boosted party morale. Too, Roosevelt assisted the GOP cause in his attack on the Supreme Court and his attempted "purge" of his own party. Nor did the economic "recession," as Democrats called it, hurt Republican efforts.⁴⁰

The November election was a stinging setback for the New Dealers.⁴¹ Postmaster General Farley termed it "the great turnover."⁴² Republicans exceeded their own predictions as they gained eighty-one new House seats, eight Senate seats, and fourteen governorships.⁴³

³⁹A. Brown to Hoover, November 7, 1938, K-16.

⁴⁰Milton Plesur, "The Republican Congressional Come-back of 1938," Review of Politics, XXIV (October, 1962), 525-562. According to Plesur, Republicans would probably have regained the White House in 1940 except for World War II.

⁴¹Paul Y. Anderson, "What The Election Means," Nation, CXLVII (November 18, 1938), 527-528.

⁴²Milton Plesur, "The Republican Congressional Come-back of 1938," Review of Politics, XXIV (October, 1962), 525-562.

⁴³Ibid.; New York Times, November 13-14, 1938, 1.

Republicans were elated at the returns.⁴⁴ Hoover was especially pleased with the re-election of Governor John Bricker in Ohio.⁴⁵ Lester Dickinson lost in his bid for a comeback in Iowa but by such a close margin that he wired Hoover that the foundation for a 1940 campaign was laid.⁴⁶ Hooverites across the country saw the November returns as vindication of their Chief and as a "personal victory."⁴⁷ Even Chairman Hamilton wired the ex-President that "no one man has done more" for the party.⁴⁸

Hoover found encouragement in his supporters' notes and was motivated "to keep in this battle." Encouraged by the November returns, he hoped that by 1940 they could "end this episode in American life in its destructive aspects."⁴⁹

⁴⁴Reed to Hoover, November 10, 1938, K-107; J. G. Brown to Hoover, telegram, November 9, 1938, K-16, praised H.H.'s victory. "You are still our leader." Spangler to Hoover, November 11, 1938, K-127. Dickinson to Hoover, November 22, 1938, K-29. Broom to Hoover, November 7, 1938, K-15.

⁴⁵Hoover to Bricker, telegram, November 9, 1938, K-14.

⁴⁶Dickinson to Hoover, November 22, 1938, K-29. Although the Iowan referred to the party's 1940 campaign, his letter was worded in such a way that H.H. could and probably did read it to mean another Hoover campaign.

⁴⁷Spangler to Hoover, November 11, 1938, K-127. J. G. Brown to Hoover, telegram, November 9, 1938, K-16. Broom to Hoover, November 7, 1938, K-15, urged his Chief to continue his "courageous mission."

⁴⁸Hamilton to Hoover, November 9, 1938, K-47.

⁴⁹Hoover to A. Brown, November 12, and November 16, 1938, K-16.

He thought that the returns necessitated a conference of Republican leaders concerning future policy.⁵⁰

To Hooverites, the November election proved the rightness of their cause and foretold the demise of the New Deal.⁵¹ Too, Republican victory negated any realignment of conservatives in a new coalition party. For the first time in his career, Franklin D. Roosevelt was faced by an almost viable "loyal opposition."⁵² Interestingly, despite its rejection of Hoover's leadership and even his depression thesis, the GOP adopted the Hoover line in its increasingly vigorous anti-New Deal attack. Republicans bemoaned the concentration of power in the executive office, the imbalance of powers, the attack on the courts, the weakening of legislative power, the "purge" of the party, the planned economy, regimentation, bureaucracy, political machines, the destruction of the civil service, and other New Deal mistakes. Republican activity fanned the hopes of Hoover's much coveted vindication and kept alive his glimmering political desires. Grasping at every straw, the ex-President dreamed of a political resurrection.

⁵⁰Hoover to Reed, November 14, 1938, K-107. Hoover to Spangler, November 14, 1938, K-127.

⁵¹Reed to Hoover, November 10, 1938, K-107; J. G. Brown to Hoover, telegram, November 9, 1938, K-16; Spangler to Hoover, November 11, 1938, K-127; and Broom to Hoover, November 7, 1938, K-15.

⁵²James T. Patterson, "The Failure of Party Realignment in the South, 1937-1939," Journal of Politics, XXVII (August, 1965), 602-617.

CHAPTER IX

"GRAYNESS IN THE AFTERNOON"

Theodore Roosevelt once remarked, "We cannot expect to escape a certain grayness in the afternoon of life--for it is not often that life ends in the splendor of a golden sunset."¹ In many ways, the decade of the 1930's was the afternoon of Herbert Hoover's life. This became especially evident when the Republican revival of 1938 whetted his false hopes of a political resurrection. The ex-President, long isolated from political realities, genuinely believed that he was again available for public service. Ignoring the diminishing ranks of his personal legions, he misread every favorable Republican omen as a personal tribute.

He failed to see that many of the political letters he now received were courtesy responses. He refused to recognize that lieutenants such as Robert A. Taft and Earl Warren had completed their political apprenticeship, arrived at age, and wanted to try their own wings. Thus, when Taft, after analyzing GOP congressional strength, informed the Chief that the GOP minority was strong enough to prevent any

¹John Morton Blum, The Republican Roosevelt (Cambridge, 1954), 161. Hereinafter cited as Blum, Republican Roosevelt.

further radical legislation passing the Senate, Hoover anticipated Taft's continued deference to his old war-time chief.² It soon became evident that Taft had his own ambitions and did not relish an indefinite subservient role.

As Lincoln's Birthday approached, Republican politicians rolled out their most effective machinery. On February 12, Hoover, returning to the stump, addressed the National Republican Club in New York City. He spoke on "The Real State of the Union." Again, he aimed at a rebuttal of the President's State of the Union message.³

As usual, Hoover lamented the confused state of the nation with its economic disorder, rising debts, accelerating class divisions, coercion, collectivism, immorality, and power politics. Yet, he sounded a new note of optimism. He said that elections no longer could "be controlled by government subsidies." He perceived a growing independence on the part of the judiciary and the legislature. "Programs for the future," he said, "are rising daily from county and state organizations, from our youth and women's organizations, from our Republican leaders and our Program Committee."⁴

Hoover reaffirmed his principles and defended his record. Although he used the old stock phrases of

²Taft to Hoover, January 23, 1939, K-135. Significantly, Taft said, "I am learning the ropes."

³New York Times, February 13, 1939, 1. Hoover, Further Addresses, 59-68.

⁴Ibid., 59-64.

condemnation in describing the New Deal, his past bitterness was missing. Perhaps his new optimism resulted from a belief that the 1938 election had checked the radicalism of the New Deal. In the future, he would deal primarily with foreign policy. The New Deal, it seemed, was fading in political importance. Of all the speeches Hoover made in 1939, only three dealt primarily with domestic policy.⁵ Hoover's unusual silence was the best barometer in measuring New Deal activity.

Rank and file Hooverites continued to idolize their hero and encourage his "evangelistic efforts" to convert "the heathen in the East." Too, they hoped that the public would recall to service "the one man capable of the leadership" demanded by the critical times.⁶

By the spring of 1939, Hoover, conscious of the drive for convention delegates, sent friendly telegrams to every Republican conclave at the state and local level.⁷ His Iowa

⁵Ibid. Aside from his Lincoln Day Address, H.H., on June 4, 1939, spoke on "The Clash of Economic Forces With Intellectual and Spiritual Liberty," and on June 12, 1939, he spoke on the "Confusion in Words and Public Action."

⁶Ashmun Brown to Hoover, March 28, 1939, K-16. Louis Fellhauer to Hoover, February to November, 1939, K-36, often used religious imagery and heavy moralism. Fellhauer saw Hoover as "a guiding spirit."

⁷Hoover Collection, LXVIII, telegrams, Hoover to A. Reed Millar, February 6, 1939, Hoover to Maurice Cole, February 6, 1939, Hoover to Mrs. Earl Moulton, February 6, 1939, Hoover to Theodore S. Turner, February 6, 1939, and Hoover to Mrs. Jeanne Carpenter, February 6, 1939. These leaders represented local or state conclaves in Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, and Washington.

leader, Harrison Spangler, wrote the Chief that a Dewey boom was underway and was even catching on in Iowa.⁸

In Ohio, Senator Taft was the apparent favorite despite Governor Bricker's popularity. New Hampshire's George Moses described Taft as "deficient in personality or oratorical ability." Moses regretted that his state would have "such a small delegation at the convention." The ex-President, in complete agreement with Moses, expressed fear that the party had a difficult task ahead of it.⁹ To Hoover, nominating the "best man" was the impossible task.

In June, Hoover made two public addresses on the confused state of the nation, the dangers to liberty, and the necessity of defending America's traditional ideology. Although muted in their denunciation of the New Deal, the speeches afforded the ex-President some publicity and an opportunity to speak with Tennessee and Indiana Republican leaders.¹⁰ He also forayed into Minnesota.¹¹

Following Hoover's conference with Colorado GOP

⁸Spangler to Hoover, April 19, 1939, K-127.

⁹Moses to Hoover, April 28, 1939, and Hoover to Moses, May 5, 1939, K-95.

¹⁰Hoover Collection, LXIX, June 4, 1939, and June 12, 1939. Palo Alto Times, June 5, 1939. Further Addresses, 197-208, and 208-215. On June 4, H.H. spoke at Arrowgate, Tennessee, on the "Clash of Economic Forces with Intellectual and Spiritual Liberty." On June 12, at Richmond, Indiana, he spoke on "And What is Liberalism?"

¹¹Hoover Collection, LXIX, Minneapolis Tribune, June 15, 1939.

leaders in August, Drew Pearson, controversial news analyst and a sharp Hoover critic, broadcasted an incendiary speech from the University of Chicago in which he accused the ex-President of "buying Southern delegates to the 1940 Republican Presidential Convention." An infuriated Hoover denied the charges and accused Pearson of vicious slander.¹²

As speculation on another Hoover candidacy mounted, Nathan MacChesney, the Chicago lawyer who had served as a liaison between Hoover and Knox since 1935, agreed to survey the situation. MacChesney kept Knox informed of Hoover's political activity throughout the summer of 1939. The lawyer assured Knox that Hoover was not "buying up delegates" as Pearson had charged but that the Chief was "in touch with leaders throughout the country." Apparently, Hoover was reinforcing his position to the point that he would have "a very large voice in the ultimate selection of a candidate, if not a controlling one." MacChesney informed Knox that Hoover was a "stronger candidate than Taft" despite their mutual weaknesses.¹³ Within months, MacChesney endorsed a more available candidate--Senator Vandenberg.¹⁴

¹²Hoover Collection, LXIX, Colorado Daily Sentinel, August 6, 1939.

¹³MacChesney to Knox, August 11, 1939, Box 43, MacChesney Papers, is especially important.

¹⁴By December, MacChesney endorsed Vandenberg and agreed to serve as a political adviser and strategist to the Senator. See the MacChesney-Vandenberg correspondence, Box 42, MacChesney Papers.

As periodicals and newspapers printed an increasing number of articles on Hoover, his record, his role in shaping the New Deal, and certain disagreeable facts, the ex-President wrote Ashmun Brown urging an exposure of the "smear efforts." To Hoover, the nation needed enlightenment on the "whole art, theory and science of smearing" as practiced by the New Dealers.¹⁵

By December, articles on Hoover abounded in a cross-section of magazines and newspapers. Speculation on his presidential ambitions increased. Newsweek reported that a hundred delegates favored Hoover. His, it said, would be "the deciding voice" at the GOP convention.¹⁶ Time noted the feverish activity of Ben S. Allen in organizing Republican cells of twenty or more members at the county level. The cells spread Hooverian ideas among the youth of the party. They disseminated criticisms of the New Deal. Significantly, Republican charges of bureaucracy, coercion, exploitation, inefficiency, and socialism gained wider acceptance. Although their hero remained "poison at the box office," his refusal to become an "Elder Statesman" was significant.¹⁷

By early 1940, Hoover and Vandenberg were the leading

¹⁵Hoover to A. Brown, August 16, 1939, K-16.

¹⁶"Hats Clutter the GOP Ring," Newsweek, XIV (December 11, 1939), 15-16.

¹⁷Time, XXXIV (December 18, 1939), 14-16.

candidates advocating "all-out war on the New Deal." The majority of Republicans, however, hesitated to embrace such a strategy.¹⁸ On February 12, Hoover addressed the Nebraska Republican Organizations on "Our Most Important Domestic Issue." To Hoover, unemployment was the crucial problem. He said that relief could not go on forever, that free enterprise must be restored, and that only a free economy would lead to "genuine recovery."¹⁹

To Hoover, there was a "border line in the activities of free government." He thought that the Administration had violated that border and thus abetted bureaucracy, coercion, and inefficiency. He charged the New Deal with promoting monopoly. To him, government policies were so contradictory that there was now an abundance of "sand in the gears." Hoover called for a reversal of the "drift toward State-ism" and a "return to the American System."²⁰ Lawrence Sullivan's The Dead Hand of Bureaucracy popularized many of Hoover's arguments.²¹

As Congressman Joe Martin, the Republican House leader, noted, it was obvious that "Hoover would have welcomed the

¹⁸Rauch, New Deal, 235. See "GOP Grooms Its Dark Horses as Third Term Bogs Democrats," Newsweek, XV (February 12, 1940), 15-16.

¹⁹Hoover, Further Addresses, 69-75.

²⁰Ibid., 76-81.

²¹Lawrence Sullivan, The Dead Hand of Bureaucracy (New York, 1940), 30, 35, 162-163.

nomination, but events did not shape the course that way."²² A California group urged a "draft Hoover" drive in 1940. The anxious ex-President refused to sanction it. As four years earlier, he felt an open quest for the nomination would be undignified. Again, his hopes depended on a deadlocked convention.²³ He continued to avoid reality.

By 1940 there were numerous attractive Republican candidates in the field. There were at least two serious contenders who represented the Hoover viewpoint. Despite his disavowals, the "canny" Senator Vandenberg was interested. Too, he adopted the Hoover strategy and hoped for a deadlocked convention. Critics labeled him a sphinx, a chameleon, a compromiser, and a man whose ideas changed "every twenty-four hours."²⁴ Willkie boosters scoffed at his disinterest and pointed to the Senator's repeated entries into presidential primaries, as well as his quest for delegates at the state level.²⁵ Hoover, too, later remembered Vandenberg's

²²Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics, 159.

²³Johnson, Willkie, 82. Warren Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), 27-28.

²⁴Milton S. Mayer, "Men Who Would Be President," Nation, CL (May 11, 1940), 587-590.

²⁵Johnson, Willkie, 70. Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 33.

"endeavors in four Conventions to be nominated President."²⁶
 Whatever his liabilities, Vandenberg remained a constant possibility.

Senator Taft openly sought the nomination. He reached an accord with Governor Bricker and enjoyed the complete support of the Ohio delegation. He also gained support from Southern delegations. Many Hooverites drifted into the Taft camp by convention time. Sadly, the ex-President continued to advertise his own willingness.²⁷

The only other major candidate in the early running was Tom Dewey, New York City's famous district attorney. By early spring, he had emerged as the "front runner."²⁸ Although Dewey openly courted Hoover, he failed to get an official endorsement. The ex-President, however, did say that Dewey "had fired the imagination of the American youth."²⁹

²⁶Inside the cover of his personal copy of the Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, H.H. wrote and signed the following inscription: "This book is totally false to History. It really a) starts after Vandenberg sold himself to the internationalists b) supresses his long and violent isolationism c) never mentions his relations with Herbert Hoover d) misrepresents his endeavors in four Conventions to be nominated President." Hoover's copy of this book is found in the Hoover Presidential Library at West Branch, Iowa.

²⁷Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 26-28. Mayer, The Republicans, 454.

²⁸Ibid., 453-454. Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 26-28. "Primary Season Puts Roosevelt and Dewey Off to Good Start," Newsweek, XV (April 15, 1940), 15-16, stated that Dewey's Wisconsin victory eliminated Vandenberg.

²⁹Joyner, The Republican Dilemma, 14.

On February 16, 1940, the Republican Program Committee finally released its long-awaited report on A Program For A Dynamic America. The hundred-page paper offered an alternative policy to the New Deal.³⁰ While it permitted a grass roots participation and expression, it was muted in its criticism of the New Deal. It accepted the necessity of relief and expressed hope that government intervention was temporary. The tract concluded, "If the understanding is right and if the people verify it, the party of opposition returns reinvigorated from minority to majority status."³¹ The report was ominous in its search for a middle ground which would allow a broader base for the next Republican campaign. Yet, it was to the right of Congressional thinking as evidenced by the solons' opposition to its publication until after the 1938 elections.

By the end of the month it was obvious that there must be another candidate for the nomination since all the leading contenders were non-interventionists in foreign affairs. The opening for an internationalist was soon filled by Wendell Willkie. He enjoyed the support of National

³⁰New York Times, February 17, 1940, 1. Republican Program Committee, A Program For A Dynamic America (New York, 1940). Raymond Moley, "Perspective: The Glenn Frank Report," Newsweek, XV (March 4, 1930), 56, saw it as an "impressive document," a realistic, objective, program.

³¹A Program For A Dynamic America, 109. Boskin, "Politics of an Opposition Party," 247. Raymond Moley, "Perspective," Newsweek, XV (March 4, 1940), 56.

Chairman Hamilton and thus readily gained control of the inside organization.³² As the convention approached it was obvious that the door was open.

Encouraged by the activity of so many candidates, Hoover became convinced of the probability of a deadlocked convention. Newspapers and periodicals repeatedly forecast a deadlock and the selection of a dark horse candidate. Although polls and delegates indicated that Dewey, Taft, Vandenberg, and Willkie were the favorites, Hoover consistently headed the second choices.³³

The ex-President, determined to nurse such strength, stepped up his activity and sent his lieutenants out to look

³²Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 29, 64-67. "Willkie Boom," Newsweek, XV (May 13, 1940), 30. Raymond Moley, "Perspective: Willkie," Newsweek, XV (May 20, 1940), 72.

³³New York Times, May 1, May 3, 1940, 1, discussed a Dewey-Taft standoff. New York Times, May 17, 1940, 15, published the latest Gallup Poll which showed a Dewey, Taft, Vandenberg, Willkie, Hoover preference. New York Times, June 3, 1940, 1, predicted a GOP deadlock with H.H. a dark-horse possibility. It pointed to his control of the California delegation. New York Times, June 9, 1940, 2, carried the "draft Hoover" proposal of a Palo Alto group. The unauthorized move was led by educators who praised H.H.'s "sheer ability, organizing genius, and statesmanship." New York Times, June 12, 1940, 23, reported the latest Gallup Poll which showed a Dewey, Willkie, Taft, Vandenberg, and Hoover order. "GOP Puzzle," Newsweek, XV (June 17, 1940), 40-41, forecast a tight race. Raymond Moley, "The Republican Choice," Newsweek, XV (June 17, 1940), 72, anticipated a deadlocked convention and saw H.H. as a real possibility. Of H.H., he said, "He remains the best informed public figure" and "time has placed [him] in a kindlier light." "GOP Moves on Philadelphia to Pick the Man and Issue," Newsweek, XV (June 24, 1940), 31-32, after the big four, saw H.H. with his "unpredictable strength" as a definite candidate.

for additional support. On May 1, Walter Newton sent Larry Richey a list of the Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota delegates. The Chief hurriedly sent all of them autographed copies of his Further Addresses Upon the American Road. He openly courted their good will.³⁴ As late as June, Hoover acquired a confidential summary of delegate names, attitudes, and favorite candidates from the Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee delegations. The ex-President had long enjoyed the support of Southern Republicans, and Carlyle Littleton reassured him of his widespread popularity among the Dixie delegations.³⁵

Hoover was encouraged when Republican candidates adopted his tactic of denouncing New Deal methods. Even Wendell Willkie, the alleged liberal of the front four, was criticizing Roosevelt and endorsing certain Hooverian principles.³⁶ Such tactics only reinforced Hoover's

³⁴Newton to Richey, May 1, 1940, K-97.

³⁵Carlyle S. Littleton to Hoover, June 21, 1940, K-97. Littleton even advised H.H. how he should approach certain Southern delegates.

³⁶Willkie bemoaned the abandonment of "free enterprise," the extension of bureaucracy, the decision making by "non-elected commissioners," and charged the New Deal with retarding recovery. He blasted FDR's promises and performance on inflation, deficit spending, and unemployment. New York Times, May 12, 1940, 2. Willkie charged the New Deal with an anti-business attitude, with bureaucratic restrictions, and the destruction of the economy. He said that the "Holy Order of the New Deal has set itself and the party above country." New York Times, May 25, 1940, 8. Willkie attacked FDR's power and concluded, "we have been unfaithful to liberty; we have confused liberty with license." To him,

conviction that he was available in the event of the anticipated deadlock.

As the convention opened, Hoover stock began to climb. John L. Lewis, addressing the NAACP, startled the nation with his endorsement of the Hoover depression-recovery thesis. The labor leader praised the Hoover Administration for its 1932 efforts and lambasted the "chronic ills" of the New Deal which had retarded real recovery ever since. To Lewis, the depression would end only with a change of administrations.³⁷ The New York Times reported increasing Hoover support among the Empire State's delegation.³⁸ In the final Gallup Poll, Dewey led with forty-seven per cent to Willkie's twenty-nine per cent, but Hoover's six per cent placed him close behind Taft and Vandenberg, who polled eight per cent.³⁹ Although admitting that Hoover's delegate strength was weak at the moment, U. S. News noted his influence in every geographical area. There was increasing speculation concerning his activity and possible candidacy.⁴⁰

the New Deal had created class conflict. New York Times, June 1, 1940, 7.

³⁷New York Times, June 19, 1940, 16. Lewis, a strong Roosevelt booster in 1936, had fallen out with the President and openly supported the GOP.

³⁸New York Times, June 20, 1940, 20, concluded that H.H. ran behind only Willkie and Dewey.

³⁹Ibid., June 21, 1940, 17.

⁴⁰U.S. News, VIII (June 14, 1940), 20. New York Times, June 22, 1940, 1, and New York Times, June 23, 1940, 1-2.

Any Hoover candidacy depended on a rousing address and a deadlocked convention. The "stop-Willkie move" which surfaced on convention eve could aid Dewey but, according to the New York Times, only underlined the fact that Herbert Hoover was "a decided threat to the candidates already in the field." At the least, it held, Hoover could determine the final candidate. California was openly working for a "blitzkrieg," and Nebraska and Pennsylvania were rumored to be accelerating the "move for former President Hoover."⁴¹

Although he did not recognize it, Hoover was in the "afternoon" of his political influence. He had suffered from the deaths of his more astute lieutenants, had lost control of the party's Executive Committee, and had consistently refused the post of elder statesman. Although other candidates and factions paid the proper deference, they resented his interference and resisted his overtures for the nomination. Even a deadlocked 1940 GOP Convention would have a multitude of attractive, more available alternatives. Hoover refused to face reality. He sapped the last of his political strength in a futile effort at another nomination and eliminated the last Hooverites from party councils. The remnants

⁴¹Ibid., June 25, 1940, 1, 18. Also see Newsweek, XVI (July 8, 1940), 13, concerning the California efforts. U.S. News, VIII (June 21, 1940), 12-15, speculated that Joseph N. Pew, who controlled Pennsylvania's seventy-two votes, would lead the move to the Hoover standard after the preliminary balloting.

of his band joined Taft.⁴² The thirty-two votes the ex-President received on the third ballot at the convention served as his final curtain call.⁴³

As in 1936, Hoover was the "principal invited orator of the convention." As usual, he delivered a biting speech. He warned that America was at the crossroads and that "upon this Party again rests the responsibility for the freedom and prosperity of men for the next two generations." Again, he defended his own record and denounced intellectual dishonesty. America, he said, "must summon reason to control emotion." To him, calm realism was what the nation needed.⁴⁴

Urging a war against the New Deal, he told Republicans that they "must battle for the greatest cause entrusted to the government of mankind." Liberty, he said, was threatened. Too, he indicted the New Deal for delaying recovery, promoting economic confusion, for dividing the country along class lines, and for obstructing equality of opportunity.⁴⁵

In calling for a "regeneration of America," the ex-President recalled traditional American mores and values, especially the "belief in God" and the "belief in the right

⁴²Johnson, Willkie, 82. Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 28.

⁴³Twenty-Second Republican National Convention (Washington, 1940), 290.

⁴⁴Ibid., 115-133.

⁴⁵Ibid.

to plan one's own life." Man, he said, had a soul and must seek its fullest expression. To Hoover, the GOP could restore ideals and "hold up the lamp of liberty." Hoover closed with a challenge: "Republicans! Are you prepared to fight?"⁴⁶ The ex-President's ovation was warm and enthusiastic but it lacked the emotion of 1936. There was no stampede to his standard. Although Hoover buttons surfaced to the floor of the convention, and although the ex-President, speaking through ex-Senator Dave Reed, voiced his willingness to accept a draft, the Hoover boom reminded one reporter of a "wet firecracker."⁴⁷ To many delegates, Wendell Willkie was "the only winning candidate."⁴⁸ The next evening, on the sixth ballot, Willkie became the Republican nominee.⁴⁹

Hoover's participation in the 1940 campaign was

⁴⁶Ibid., 131-133.

⁴⁷New York Times, June 26, 1940, 1, 16, headlined, "Hoover Bids For Nomination to Fight New Deal." H.H. was the "new active contender." New York Times, June 27, 1940, 3, carried Reed's disclosure of H.H.'s willingness to run. Newsweek, XVI (July 8, 1940), 7, 13-18, discusses "Anti-Hoover Tricks," which H.H.'s supporters disclosed. They found a plot to prevent the ex-President from "stampeding the convention" through the tampering of loudspeakers. Newsweek replied that it was the radiators which destroyed his effectiveness in the sweltering, over-heated convention hall. Time, XXXVI (July 8, 1940), 12-13, described H.H.'s address as his finest, most intelligent effort but thought that his mush-mouthed delivery had undercut it.

⁴⁸Time, XXXVI (July 8, 1940), 12-13.

⁴⁹New York Times, June 28, 1940, 1. Moscow, Roosevelt and Willkie, 93-95.

limited. His speeches dealt mainly with foreign policy. There were two exceptions. The first came on October 24, at Columbus, Ohio, where he spoke on "The Third Term." Hoover noted the "unwritten provision in our Constitution" which barred a third term. In a restrained voice, the ex-President, while absolving Roosevelt from aspiring to a dictatorship, warned of excessive personal power and gigantic political machines which threatened legislative and judicial independence.⁵⁰

Hoover repeated his charges concerning the Administration's "intellectual dishonesty" in its talk of recovery, its effort "to pack the Supreme Court," its purging of Congressional party members, and its minimizing the true extent of federal bureaucracy and power. Hoover urged change through the election of Wendell Willkie.⁵¹

On November 1, 1940, at Salt Lake City, Hoover made his final campaign address on "The Major Issues." He cleverly ridiculed the New Deal. He spoke of "Mr. Roosevelt's lively crusade for bigger and better production of falsification." He challenged the public to compare the President's promises with his performance. He lambasted New Deal propaganda, policies, and failures. He warned that the nation was moving toward National Socialism.⁵²

⁵⁰New York Times, October 25, 1940, 1. Hoover, Addresses Upon the American Road, 1940-1941, 224-239.

⁵¹Ibid., 230-239.

⁵²Ibid., 240-255.

Referring to his own past experience, Hoover felt qualified to discern the type president America needed. Willkie, he said, was preeminently qualified. The time for change had arrived. American spirit, he concluded, must be restored. To Hoover, America needed "a man who is truly devoted to the American Dream."⁵³ On Election Day, the voters again rejected Hoover's advice and reelected President Roosevelt.⁵⁴

To Hooverites, the Chief, even in 1940, remained "the brainiest and ablest and most really patriotic figure of all the national figures." He was the sane and sound commander. Ashmun Brown even speculated that "a wise Providence is sparing you for an even more important and responsible task in the service of all mankind . . . in the dark days ahead."⁵⁵

World War II submerged the emotion and political vituperation of the 1930's. It even quelled the New Deal. Yet the question of how an ex-President might escape a "certain grayness in the afternoon of life" remains unsolved.

Most retiring Presidents have, for a time, sought

⁵³Ibid., 254-255.

⁵⁴New York Times, November 6-8, 1940, 1.

⁵⁵A. Brown to Hoover, July 9, 1940, K-15.

seclusion.⁵⁶ Yet, as Theodore Roosevelt noted, "there is not one among us in whom a devil does not dwell; at some time, on some point, that devil masters each of us; he who has never failed has not been tempted."⁵⁷ Men of energy, men whose record or convictions have been challenged, and men whose egos have suffered, have particularly found retirement difficult.⁵⁸ After leaving office, Roosevelt admitted that "an ex-President does not do enough good to counterbalance the disadvantage of his taking any part as regards public questions."⁵⁹ Yet, like the apolitical John Quincy Adams who had found that political activity had become "as

⁵⁶William Howard Taft was relieved at his escape from office. Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft, II (New York, 1939), 843-847-852. Theodore Roosevelt tried, for awhile, to maintain silence. Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 146, 142. Grover Cleveland wanted the quiet life. Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland (New York, 1932), 738, 745, and Charles W. Stein, The Third Term Tradition (New York, 1943), 124. John Quincy Adams sought seclusion and tried to maintain public silence. Samuel Flagg Bemis, John Quincy Adams And The Union (New York, 1956), 154-155, 185-195. Herbert Hoover, as noted in Chapter III of this work, at first sought sanctuary.

⁵⁷Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 161.

⁵⁸Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 142; George A. Lipsky, John Quincy Adams (New York, 1950), 44, discusses Adams as confident, egotistical, and inflexible. Bemis, Adams, 209, describes Adams as "set on some sort of political comeback, big or little." H.H.'s post-presidential career closely compared to that of Adams and Roosevelt. All three had strong personalities, certain psychological needs, boundless energy, and a devotion to a set of principles.

⁵⁹Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 146.

much a necessary of life as atmospheric air,"⁶⁰ Roosevelt decided to pursue political activity after the presidential years.⁶¹ So it was with Hoover.

In contrast to the aggressive roles of Adams, Roosevelt, and Hoover, other ex-Presidents lived an active but apolitical life. Grover Cleveland and William Howard Taft are the best examples. Although both men left Washington under a cloud of disfavor, and although both men were devoted to principles which were under steady attack, their personalities permitted them to find a happy, useful life outside politics. Interestingly, both men lived long enough to recover popular favor.⁶² Concerning the political activity of ex-Presidents, Taft wryly suggested the use of "chloroform or lotus fruit."⁶³

Most ex-Presidents, since the late nineteenth century,

⁶⁰Lipsky, Adams, 40.

⁶¹Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 146-147.

⁶²In retirement, Taft returned to law practice, served as a professor of law at Yale, and fulfilled his life-long ambition by serving as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Pringle, Taft, II, 847, 852, 856-868, 926-950. For his championing of judicial reform and independence see pp. 994-1029. Cleveland took on the role of educator and found contentment as a family man. Yet, he maintained an interest in politics, privately criticized Roosevelt, and hoped that his party would "reaffirm old principles which the times demand." There were efforts to run him in 1904, but he resisted the pleas and stated that his decision was "unalterable and conclusive." Nevins, Cleveland, 745-747, 754-755. Also see Charles W. Stein, Third Term Tradition, 134-135, 138.

⁶³Pringle, Taft, II, 845.

have written articles for periodicals during their early years of retirement.⁶⁴ Historian Thomas A. Bailey says that the former chief executives have attempted to "rig the record" with articles, speeches, memoirs, and personal records.⁶⁵ To Bailey, the three most active ex-Presidents, John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, and Herbert Hoover, especially tried to write their own version of history. In trying to improve their own image, they also vigorously defended their records and exceeded good taste in criticizing their successors.⁶⁶

The three most active ex-Presidents had much in common. Each witnessed a decline in his party's fortunes; each was a poor loser; each was stung by the criticism of his opponents; each was hypercritical of his successor; each was confident of his own rightness; each desired vindication; each sought a political comeback; each had a sense of duty; each saw himself as a leader of the whole nation; and each used the rhetoric of a moral teacher in his emphasis on soul, morality, conscience, duty, law, and justice.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Nevins, Cleveland, 737; Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 143; Pringle, Taft, II, 847-868; Bailey, Presidential Greatness, 119-121, includes Coolidge and Hoover.

⁶⁵Ibid., 119-121.

⁶⁶Bailey, Presidential Greatness, 117-121. In this vein, Cleveland was also very critical of President Roosevelt. Nevins, Cleveland, 754.

⁶⁷Lipsky, Adams, 41-45; Bemis, Adams, 154-156, 196, 209-210, 280-296, 474, 529; Blum, Republican Roosevelt, 142-161.

Fortunately, time favored Hoover. He outlived that "grayness" of life and emerged as an elder statesman in a second post-war era. The last role was tailored for his abilities and interests. By putting aside politics, he devoted his talents, recalled his vast experience, and exercised his administrative techniques in drawing up the guidelines for an extensive reorganization of the executive branch of government under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. The Hoover Commission Reports served as a significant political contribution and a touching memorial to his deepest reform ideas.⁶⁸

With age, Hoover mellowed. The cutting knife of his earlier bitterness proved less lethal. By the 1950's, Democrats as well as Republicans offered him accolades. Even former New Dealers treated him kindly in their memoirs and journalistic accounts of the 1930's. Yet, the complex puzzle that was Herbert Hoover necessitates fitting in political pieces, long missing.

⁶⁸Hoover Commission Report: U. S. Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of Government (New York, 1949), viii, includes an introduction by H.H. which states that the objective of the commission was "to assist those who work to make a lasting reality of . . . a Government which will forever be the servant, not the master, of our people." Laurin L. Henry, Presidential Transition (Washington, 1960), 681-682, labels the second Hoover Commission as more conservative in its endorsement of government activity and administrative reform. According to Henry, it tried to remove government from the business field. Also see Neil MacNeil and Harold W. Metz, The Hoover Report, 1953-1955 (New York, 1956), for an area by area analysis.

Hoover was sometimes a tragic figure, sometimes a ludicrous one, but always a political one. Although he preferred the role of "philosopher," he was capable of playing politics and was more political-minded than his critics or friends admit. As he often professed, he had a distaste for politics and never played the game with ability. Nor was his personality suited for such a role. Nonetheless, he carried on a copious correspondence--frequently with political aims--anxiously inquired into local politics, courted political power brokers, offered and sought advice, developed strategy and tactics at the local and national level, outlined a platform of principles, published political articles and books, sought jobs for political friends, kept tabs on congressional leaders, exerted pressure and sometimes control over the national party organization, rallied dissidents, fragmented his own party, defined issues, defended his own record, tried to lead his party, and eventually transmitted most of his ideas to the largest bloc if not the majority of the party. He continually spoke of apolitical motives, ideas, and the nation's needs. He used the rhetoric and maneuvers of a politician.

Throughout the 1930's, Hoover made one last political effort. His personal frustration, his need for vindication, and his detailed philosophy of American Individualism motivated his determined, often bitter, defense of his ideas and record. Possessing an extreme sensitivity to New Deal weaknesses or inconsistencies, he enjoyed the role of a Jeremiah.

He wanted to persuade the public of his rightness. He looked forward to battle with his antagonists.

More than any other conservative leader, Hoover illustrates Richard Hofstadter's thesis that conservatives and reformers reversed their ideological roles in the 1930's.⁶⁹ Like reformers of the past, Hoover, as leader of the opposition, expressed concern over moral decay, malignant corruption, regimentation, the eclipse of liberty, and a dark future. However, he played the role for political as well as personal reasons. His attacks on the New Deal were persistent, cutting, and shrill, although partly a reflex action to the attacks from his opponents. Too often, however, his own criticism was politically calculated, extravagant, and vituperatively personal.

There was a certain irony in his onslaught, for he sincerely believed many of his wildest charges. Perhaps he had lived abroad too long. Revolution, conspiracy, corruption, and other "evils" evoked sharp images in his mind. He had a genuine fear of mass revolution. New Deal phrases evoked special nuances, even hidden meanings, in his intellectual framework. Inevitably, his denunciation of the "new path" entailed emotion, bitterness, and panic. Much of his analysis was as biased and unobjective as that of his own

⁶⁹Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 317-318, says that during the New Deal, reformers stressed the practical, the necessary, and the facts, whereas conservatives, shocked at the rapidity of change, focused on traditional ideas, sound principles, the constitution, morality, and liberty.

critics.

In his better moments, he emphasized ideas. Many of his homilies concerning the duties of citizens (or "soldiers" as he called them) acquired a certain sacredness among his followers. His lieutenants shared his inspiration, character, moral values, and determination. They encouraged his "new crusade."

His political environment, his coterie of lieutenants, and his isolation emasculated his realism, even his judgment. He failed politically, even by his own standards. The GOP defeats of 1932, 1934, 1936, and 1937 were personal. Too, the party rejected him in 1936, it rejected his lieutenants in 1938, and ignored his availability in 1940. Yet, his own influence was considerable inside the hierarchy and with rank and file Republicans. He was a force to be reckoned with and his party rivals, his New Deal antagonists, and news analysts testified to his strength in their constant recognition of his activity and possible leadership.

Although his criticism was often more embarrassing to his own stature than to his targets, it was frequently logical, sometimes realistic, and on occasions, positive. He unmasked some dangerous flaws in the New Deal. He pointed to the need for a change in methods. Whatever the correlation, many of his arguments were adopted by his party, and, on occasions, by the nation. He was an early critic of the NRA, the Court Plan, and electioneering by government employees. Although the Republican Program Committee was

less than he hoped, it did provide a grass roots expression and participation in defining Republican ideas. Many successful GOP candidates of 1938 won because of an anti-New Deal campaign. Hoover continually maximized whatever political strength he possessed.

If Hoover had used another strategy in the 1930's would he have been more successful in fighting the New Deal? Given his personality and experience there was no other strategy possible. However, looking at other GOP figures, what strategy worked better? What Republican leader eclipsed Hoover's influence in the 1930's? What Democrat except Roosevelt? What man, stigmatized as the architect of the Depression, and possessing such an elaborate ideological framework, could have scored a comeback? Nor can the personality of his chief antagonist and the popularity of the New Deal be ignored. Hoover's frustration and failure were unavoidable. In the "grayness of the afternoon" he proved to be a sore loser. As the 1930's closed, he withdrew from the political arena--permanently. The vindication he sought was unattainable.

With the passing of time, however, many of Hoover's theses have gained wide acceptance. Historians now accept the international nature of the Great Depression, the fact that unemployment remained around ten million throughout the 1930's, and that only World War II led to the recovery which the New Deal had failed to foster. Even former New Dealers have questioned the wisdom of FDR's interregnum attitudes,

the waste, corruption and inefficiency within New Deal agencies, and the expansion of executive power.

Today, as in the 1930's, bureaucracy is recognized as a Leviathan and political morality is debated, businessmen express concern over the coercion, regimentation, and the loss of a "free economy," and the disenchanted speak, in Hooverian terms, of an individualism, "equal opportunity," and liberty. Again the words carry connotations and loaded meanings.

Hoover remains relevant because of the role of ideas in his political action. Environment and education gave him an acute sense of values. Because he saw all issues in moral terms, compromise was a sin. An unusual set of circumstances led him to the pinnacle of power at the very moment a man of his instincts was least capable of governing. Despite the change through which he lived, Hoover logically, but unrealistically, defended the past through the political media. At last he played to the emotional element in man, but denied he was so doing. At last he utilized the political tools without comprehending the art. But then, like Thoreau's individualist, Hoover heard a different drummer and marched to the tune he heard.

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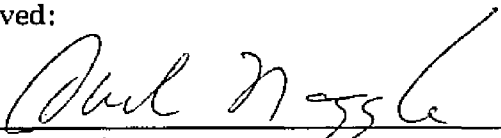
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Candidate: Henry Esli Everman

Major Field: History


Title of Thesis: Herbert Hoover and the New Deal, 1933-1940

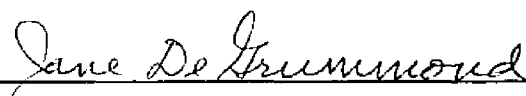
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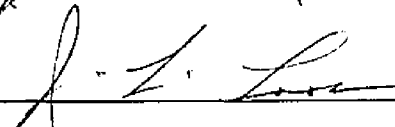

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